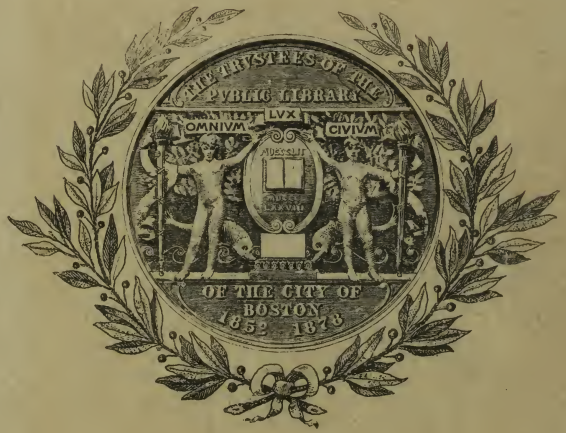
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BOATING LIFE AT OXFORD.

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BOATING LIFE

AT

OXFORD.

With Notes on

OXFORD TRAINING

AND

ROWING AT THE UNIVERSITIES.

LONDON:
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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE papers here gathered together are by three different Writers, in the following proportion:

1. Boating Life at Oxford.
2. Water-Derbies.
3. Rowing at the Universities.

The first and second were originally contributed to *London Society*, whilst the closing Notes appeared in the *Pall-Mall Gazette*.

These Notes are here added to "Water-Derbies" in order to show what is necessary, in the opinion of competent observers from both Universities, to enable Cambridge to regain her ancient position on the water, and so reverse the results of recent years.

CONTENTS.

BOATING LIFE AT OXFORD.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW CAPTAIN.

Most people who know anything of Oxford, know that of all the amusements of the place, boating is the most absorbing, and the most keenly pursued. Not only on bright summer evenings, but through the damp mists of November, and the frost and sleet of February, the river from Folly Bridge to Iffley Lock is covered with craft of all descriptions, from the quiet "dingey" to the stately "eight." Whatever be the attractions to be found elsewhere, whatever be the state of wind or weather, be it rain, hail, or snow, as long as boats can live, boats are launched, and the regular frequenters of the river pursue their daily recreation, or, rather, their daily business, for business it is; more or less absorbing with different men, but a business with all. Probably most people, who are connected either as friends or relatives with Oxford men, know thus much about Oxford boating; but few understand why its influence so widely pervades Oxford life, and its spirit so deeply enters into

every Oxford man, whether he take part in it personally or not. Of course Jones's sisters are delighted to hear that he is going to row "Bow of the 'Varsity" this year, and they like the excitement of getting up in the twilight to go and see the race; possibly they know what is meant by a "bump" and a "stroke;" but why John should think so much of his boat making a "bump," why he should speak of rowing in the Eight at Putney as preferable to any number of first-classes, they cannot understand. And Jones's father, from his oracular post on the hearthrug, says, "Boating is a fine, manly exercise, but he hopes John will not allow it to interfere with his studies, and make a business of what should only be a pastime." So that, on the whole, Jones feels that on the subject dearest to his heart he does not receive much sympathy in the domestic circle. Now this want of interest in a pursuit which engages much of the time and energies of young men of both our great universities, is surely to be regretted, and is, in fact, regretted by many. It is not, of course, to be expected that those who do not engage personally in a pursuit should feel an equal interest in it with those who do; but it seems both possible and desirable that they should understand how that interest arises, and is so constantly maintained among university men of every variety of taste and every degree of muscular development. I purpose, therefore, to attempt, in a few sketches of boating life and boating men, to illustrate without exaggeration, and sometimes by scenes from real life, the important position that boating holds at Oxford, to account for the enthusiasm it creates, and to mark the nature of its influence on the life of an Oxford man. I shall

begin, without further preface, with some account of

A College Meeting.

On the morning of the 22d of January 18—, the following notice was posted on the inside of the College gates:

"St. Anthony's College Boat Club. A meeting of the Club will be held on Monday evening next, in Mr. Macleane's rooms, at nine o'clock, to elect a Captain, and transact other business of importance.

"(Signed) Charles Thornhill,
"Captain."

I, Tom Maynard, a freshman, read this notice, in common with the rest of the College, as I walked forth for a morning stroll between Chapel and breakfast. Looking back at myself as I was then, I believe I may say without vanity that I was pretty much what a freshman ought to be. I had a proper reverence for senior men, a proper wish to support the institutions of my college, especially the College boat, a desire to avoid "a bad set," and a wholesome fear of doing anything that might seem "fresh," or might cause me to be considered cheeky or presumptuous. I had, therefore, some doubts, after reading the notice of meeting, as to whether, in spite of having the day before paid a subscription of 2*l.* 2*s.*, I was entitled to take part in the august deliberations of the St. Anthony's Boat Club. However, having taken counsel with a brother freshman, who, being of a more bustling temper than I, made more blunders, but got his information on things in general quicker than I did, I learned that I might consider myself a full-blown member of the club, with a right

to "speak, vote, and blow up the officers, and propose anything, my dear fellow,"—such were his words—"propose yourself for captain, and me for stroke of the Eight, if you like." After this assurance from my friend Wingfield, an enthusiastic and mercurial man, whose soul "o'er-informed its tenement of clay," the said tenement weighing under seven stone, I determined to go to the meeting, and to the meeting I went.

It was ten minutes after nine o'clock when I reached Mr. Macleane's rooms. Business had not yet commenced, but there was a tolerably good muster already. Men of all sizes were lounging about the room, some disposing their limbs in the most luxurious manner on easy-chairs and sofas, some leaning against the high oak mantelpiece, some perched on tall seats in the window; about half were smoking, and several huge tankards of beer were passed round the room from time to time, and were saluted with much gusto. "Look here," said Wingfield, who sat next me, and took his pull at the beer with the air of an old hand, "this cup is to commemorate the year when we won everything at Henley—the Grand Challenge, the Ladies' Plate, the Stewards', and the Diamond Sculls. Rather good, wasn't it, old boy? And d'ye see that big thing with a lid to it? They say a man once drank it right off in Hall: it very nearly killed him, and no wonder, for it holds more than two quarts; but he's all right now; a parson somewhere in the country, I believe." While Wingfield was giving me this information in an under-tone, there was plenty of chaff going about the room, and an occasional bit of "bear-fighting," which I may describe,

for the benefit of the uninitiated, as a friendly interchange of compliments, taking the form of wrestling, heaving of sofa-cushions, &c.

At the table, with a large moderator, and pens, ink, and paper before him, sat the captain, conferring gravely with the secretary, who sat at his right, on the business about to be transacted.

"I say, Barrington," shouted the captain to one of the men in the window, "just sing out once more, and if no one else turns up, we'll begin."

Barrington upon this opened the window, and called out, in tones varying from a cracked tenor to a tragic bass, the single monosyllable "Drag." Having done this about a dozen times, apparently to his own immense enjoyment, he closed the window, and awaited the result of his efforts. "The Eight are not all here," said a sharp voice. "I hope you'll fine those who are away, Thornhill; it's the rule, you know." "All right, Tip, it's only old Five; he's always late, but he's sure to come."

"O! here you are, at last," cried Tip, as the door opened, and a very large body, surmounted by a good-humoured and rather handsome face, with a short pipe in its mouth, loafed into the room. "You're just in time. You'd have been fined in another second."

"I'll break your neck when I get near you, young 'un," returned Number Five. "I hope I'm not late, Thornhill; there was a rattling brew of bishop going in Jackson's rooms, that was too good to leave."

"Of course; we knew you must be lushing somewhere," put in Tip.

"Will you shut up?" replied the big man, threatening him with the tankard he had taken up on first

entering the room. "The fact is, captain, I believe I'm like those things in the Greek Testament, that stumped me in the Schools the other day, containing two or three firkins apiece." "Ah!" said Thornhill, "only very little of it is water; however, sit down, and we'll begin. Order, order!"

At this all hats went off, and everybody listened.

"Gentlemen," said Thornhill, "before we proceed to the main business of the evening, the secretary will read the annual statement of accounts."

Hallett, the secretary, then rose and made a brief and not very lucid statement, from which it appeared that the club was not more than 150*l.* in debt, and there was great hope that, with careful management, the debts might be easily paid off in the course of a few years.

When the "Hear, hear," that greeted the secretary's statement had subsided, Thornhill rose again and said, after scraping his throat more than once, "Gentlemen, I have now to resign the captaincy of the club, and to ask you to elect a fresh man in my place."

Although everyone had known long before that the captain was going to resign, no one seemed to have realised the fact till now, and there was silence all through the room.

"If that were all," continued Thornhill, "I should not trouble you with a speech; but, as I shall leave the College to-morrow, and be on my way to India probably within a fortnight, I want to say a word or two before I go."

He spoke the last sentence quickly, as if he feared

his voice might fail him before he got to the end of it, and then paused and looked hard at the table-cloth.

"Pass that beer," exclaimed the ever-thirsty No. Five, whose name, by the bye, was Baxter. "Young Tip, you're not fit to live."

Tip took a long pull himself, and then passed the tankard, taking care to keep well out of reach of Baxter's arm.

"No man in the College," continued Thornhill, raising his eyes, "will ever leave it with more regret than I shall. I have passed a happier four years here than I ever did or ever shall pass again. I have made a good many friends who will last me my life. [Hear, hear, and 'Rather, old fellow,' from Baxter.] And I think that everyone here at least wishes me well. [Loud cheering all round the room, in which Wingfield and I joined with great enthusiasm.] I thank you with all my heart for your kindness," Thornhill went on, "and I'll never forget it; and wherever I may be, I'll try and do credit to the old place." Here everyone cheered lustily, and then Thornhill began again in a firmer tone. "And now, gentlemen, before I go, I want to say something about the boating of the College. Our Eight stands higher on the river now than it has stood for the last ten years [great cheering]; and with such men as Hallett and Baxter to pull the boat along, it ought to go higher still. [Hear, hear.] I wish to thank those gentlemen and all the members of the Eight, for the goodwill they have always shown me, helping me, both in the boat and out of the boat, to get the Eight well up on the river. They have always been willing to submit their judgment to

mine, and have trained, with one or two exceptions, conscientiously throughout. ['Aha! Bags,' said Tip, *sotto voce*, to Baxter, 'that's one for you. Who drank beer at eleven o'clock in the morning?'] I hope the next captain may be able to say the same; there is not a grander thing to be seen in the world than a set of men yielding obedience of their own free will to a ruler of their own choosing. Depend upon it, if all the men of the College work well together, and keep up good training and discipline, the boat will go to the head of the river, and the reputation of the College all round will rise with it. You may be sure, when I am out in India, that I shall watch eagerly for any news of the College, and the College boat; and sha'n't I make a rush at *Bell's Life*, whenever I get a chance, to see what the Eights are doing! If I could only see our boat row head of the river, I think I shouldn't mind if I died the next minute."

Then Thornhill sat down, and the cheering was long and loud. When it was over, we proceeded to the election of a new captain. A slip of paper was handed round on which each wrote the name of the man he considered fittest for the captaincy.

"I shall vote for Hallett," said I to Wingfield. "He's the right man, isn't he? Stroke of the Eight, you know."

"Well, I don't know," returned Wingfield. "I rather think I shall vote for Percy, the little man they call 'Tip;' he steered the 'Varsity Eight; Hallett is not a 'Varsity oar."

I think Wingfield had a secret ambition to steer the 'Varsity Eight himself, and wished to create a

precedent for his own election to the captaincy; and perhaps there was a similar feeling in my own secret bosom, when I voted for Hallett. The voting-papers were now collected, and Thornhill announced the result—"Mr. Hallett is elected by a large majority." Then he retired and seated himself in a quiet corner by Baxter, and Hallett took the chair amid hearty cheering.

"Gentlemen," said Hallett, rising as soon as there was a calm, "I thank you with all my heart for the honour you have conferred upon me, the greatest honour you could confer, and one that, I don't mind saying, I have wished for many and many a time. I hope I shall do credit to the post —at any rate I'll try." ["Of course you will, old boy," from Baxter.] "However, I won't make any promises now, but just say a word about old Thornhill, who is leaving us. Most of us here know him well; and I can tell those who don't, that he's the best man, the truest friend, and the pluckiest oar that ever stepped. His rowing last year at Putney, bow of the Eight, was a treat to see, and he was the only man in the boat whose back was as straight as a board when the boat passed Hammersmith Bridge. I have often heard it said, 'O, everybody knows Thornhill is the best oar in Oxford for his size.'" ["Wouldn't you like that to be said of you?" said Wingfield to me. "Rather!" I replied; and all my soul was in the word.] "No one," went on Hallett, "ever loved the College with all his heart like Charlie Thornhill; and he may be sure the College will not forget him; and whenever any success turns up, and we win a prize or gain a place on the river, our first thought will be 'Won't old Thornhill be pleased at

this?' It will keep his spirits up, if ever they are down, to know that the old place remembers him kindly, and that, whenever his name is mentioned among the old men who have left us, whether in a toast at supper, or over a quiet glass of wine, he will always be spoken of as 'dear old Thornhill.' And now, gentlemen, let us give him musical honours and three times three."

All rose at once; and Baxter, who had been patting Thornhill on the back throughout Hallett's speech, with more or less vigour, according to the variation of his feelings, led off in a stentorian voice, with "He's a jolly good fellow," &c., in which we joined with all our might. Then followed such cheers as I never heard in all my life before, prolonged till we were all hoarse, and nearly deaf. Thornhill sat all the time in the same corner by the window with a half-smile on his face, trying not to show the emotion he really felt. After the cheers, Baxter, who by this time was getting excited, proposed "Auld lang syne," which was sung with fresh enthusiasm. Then everyone crowded to shake hands with Thornhill, and wish him good-bye; and I, on the strength of having been coached by him two or three times in a tub pair-oar, grasped his hand like the rest, and thought it the greatest honour I ever received. Then Thornhill left the room with Baxter, and I saw something very like a tear in the corner of his eye as he went. And so the meeting ended, and I went to my room with a flushed face, and a tumult of thoughts in my brain which kept me awake till near morning.

CHAPTER II.

OUR "TORPID."

As few people, in all probability, know what is meant by a "Torpid," it may be as well to begin with a brief explanation of that rather unattractive term. There are two periods of the year at which races regularly take place between the eight-oared boats of the various colleges in Oxford, namely, March and May. In May crews formed of the best eight men that can be got together out of each college, and called *par excellence* the "Eights," race against each other for the headship of the river, or strive to come as near it as they may. In March the racing of the second-best boats takes place: these boats are the "Torpids." Why so called none can tell; the origin of the name is veiled in mystery, which it would seem to the present writer sacrilege to attempt to penetrate. No one who has rowed in his College Eight of the previous year is allowed to row in a Torpid, so that the Torpid crews are formed chiefly of the fresh blood of the year, and, as showing what is the new material in each College, the Torpid races possess a peculiar interest for the rowing community of Oxford. So much for explanation, which, however necessary, is likely to be dull. I shall now pro-

ceed with the history of the St. Anthony's Torpid for the year 18—.

We had always been proud of our Torpid; I say "we," for, though at the time I speak of I was but a freshman, I felt myself heir to all the old traditions of the College, and a good Torpid was one of the oldest. Whatever our pick of men might be, whatever bad luck we might have—and we had our share—we had always worked hard and made the best of it; and we could, and often did say with pride, that never since we first put on a Torpid had we fallen so low as to take it off. The year before I came up to St. Anthony's our boat had moved up from ninth to fifth on the river, and the prowess of the crew was well remembered at every festive gathering in the College. This year, however, our prospects were not of the brightest; our best men had been drafted into the Eight, and the freshmen of the year were not a promising lot; or, according to Baxter, who, like most big men, inclined to a desponding view of things, "no good at all."

"Why, look here, young 'un," I heard him say to the more sanguine Tip, "I coached that big lubber Wilkinson every day last term to try and make something of him, and all he does now is to put his oar in deep, and pull it out with a jerk."

"Well but, my dear fellow," returned Tip, "all that bone and muscle must be got to work somehow, and I'm sure the man's willing enough; besides, just think what an awful duffer you were yourself when you began to row; by Jove, I shall never forget your plaintive old face when Thornhill was pitching into you for not keeping your arms straight!"

"No more of that, Tip, or I'll scrag you," replied

Baxter, as Tip began an imitation of his first essay in rowing; "I'll have another turn at the big duffer, but it's my belief the boat will be bumped three times with the crew we've got at present. Come along: it's time we were down at the barge."

From the time when Thornhill resigned, and said good-bye, the boating spirit had entered deeply into my soul, and I made a strong resolve that, if perseverance and hard work could do it, I would some day be a good oar. I had learned something about the handling of an oar on the river near my own home, and by dint of hard practice and plenty of coaching achieved at last what was then the dearest wish of my heart, a place in the St. Anthony's Torpid. Wingfield, being by far the lightest man in the College, and possessing that quickness and self-confidence which is indispensable in a coxswain, was learning the art of steering, and was pretty sure to keep his position in the stern of the boat.

It wanted now three weeks to the first day of the races, and I was seated in the window of my rooms, which were on the ground-floor, pegging away at Euripides for the "smalls" that loomed in the distance, when I was aware of Hallett and Baxter talking at a short distance from me.

"Have you considered, old man," began Baxter, "that it only wants three weeks to the races, and the Torpid's not made up yet?"

"Yes, I know," replied Hallett, "it's an awkward state of things; the men ought to go into training to-morrow, but it's no use without having the crew settled, and especially stroke."

"Just so," said Baxter, rather indistinctly, for he had a cigar in his mouth. "Well, what's to be

done? We must try somebody; there's Wilkinson will do well enough for five; I must say he's turned out better than ever I expected; and Vere is pretty good at six, and Hilton makes a fair two, but none of them would do for stroke."

"Well, there's young Maynard," observed Hallett reflectively; at that I pricked up my ears, and Euripides and smalls vanished into thin air. "He's not the best oar in the boat," continued Hallett, "but he has the most pluck and go about him of any; suppose we try him to-day. Whereabouts does he hang out? Hallo!" he went on, in a lower tone, "isn't that his name over the door? If he's in, he must have heard all we've been saying." With that he knocked, and both entered.

"Good morning, Maynard; I expect you heard what Baxter and I were talking about outside." I turned rather red, and confessed I had. "Well," said Hallett, "you see we want you to row stroke to-day, and if you get on all right we'll begin training to-morrow."

"You mustn't be surprised, you know," said Baxter, "if you're sent back to your old place."

"O, of course not," replied I meekly, "but I'll do the best I can to keep my place at stroke."

"All right," returned Hallett; "mind you're down in time—three o'clock sharp, you know," and he and Baxter left the room.

I remember, as if it were yesterday, the feeling of mingled pride and misgiving with which I stepped into the boat that afternoon to row stroke. I felt as if all the river would be watching every turn of my oar, and, as the boat went swinging down the stream, I fancied I could hear the men on the barges saying

to each other, "Here comes St. Anthony's; so they've got a stroke at last; wonder what he's like." Baxter's voice on the bank, however, soon recalled me to my senses. "Not so quick, Stroke!" "Keep your feather down!" "You're missing the beginning!" and so on, at intervals, all the way down.

At Iffley we turned and began the row up, Hallett and Baxter, not to be shaken off, keeping up a raking fire from the bank. "Put your back into it, five." "Mind the time, three." "Slowly forward, two." "Hallo, Wingfield, mind what you're about; look ahead, steer in shore; by Jove there'll be a smash!" "Look ahead," cried Wingfield, suddenly jumping up in the utmost excitement. "Easy all! Hold her!"

In another second we felt a shock all through the boat; there was a crash of oars, and we were pitched head first into the water.

"I—can't—swim," panted Wingfield, as he came to the surface, and, before I could seize him, disappeared again. In a few seconds the small head rose once more, and this time I managed to grasp the little man by the collar, and, with some trouble, got him astride of the boat, which lay bottom upwards on the water. The rest had by this time got ashore, and I now followed them, leaving little Wingfield, by no means sure of his seat, on the boat, the water streaming from him on all sides, and altogether looking the most comical picture possible. He was soon rescued by a punt, and then we all ran back to our barge to change our wet flannels and keep the cold off by a nip of brandy at the Boat-House Tavern.

"Well, Wingfield, you made rather a mess of

your steering just now," said Hallett; "you and the cox. of the other boat both lost your heads."

Wingfield looked very crest-fallen.

"Well, never mind," said Hallett; "how are you now?"

"O, all right, thank you. You see, I can't swim, so I was rather in a funk at the time."

"Yes, anybody could see that," remarked Tip, who had enjoyed the whole thing immensely. "When you were safe astride of the boat, you looked just like John Gilpin when his horse ran away."

"I hate that fellow Tip," said Wingfield to me immediately afterwards, "don't you? No, of course you don't, you never hate anybody, why should you? it's only small men who've reason to hate; they're obliged to do it in self-defence. But, old fellow, I haven't thanked you yet for pulling me out of a watery grave; you may be sure I sha'n't forget it, and I'll pay you back some day when I get the chance." I could tell by the tone of his voice that he meant more than he said, and I felt that from that day the little "Torpid" coxswain was the firmest friend I had.

As we walked up from the river, Baxter said, "Maynard, we've settled that you'll do for stroke, and the crew is to go into training to-morrow. Breakfast in Hallett's rooms to-morrow morning, and mind everybody has a good walk first. Wingfield, you'll have to see that all the crew are off to bed by half-past ten."

And so the business of training began, and beef and mutton twice a day was our food for nearly a month. I shall not now enter into the details of that training; how "bow" was ill, or fancied he was, for

three days; how Vere was nearly turned out of the boat for being out of bed at midnight; how Wilkinson turned sulky, and spread a spirit of mutiny among the crew; and how Hilton once ate buttered toast for breakfast, and caper-sauce with his boiled mutton, all which particulars, however momentous in the eyes of the St. Anthony's Torpid then, would doubtless be tedious to the general reader. Suffice it to say, that the first day of the races found us all in excellent fettle and high spirits, and even Baxter was fain to confess that we had improved immensely in the last week, and might make a bump or two. Does everybody know what is meant by a "bump"? Very likely not. So, at the risk of being considered a bore, I shall take the liberty to explain.

The Torpid races are conducted in the manner following. At the part of the river where the start takes place a number of posts are placed along the bank 160 feet apart, and by one of these each boat takes its station according to the order of the previous year, the head boat being highest up the river, the second 160 feet behind it, and so on to the last. To each post a rope is made fast, one end of which, having a large bung attached, is held by the coxswain of the boat. When the starting-gun fires, the bungs are dropped, and each boat starts in pursuit of the one before it. Any boat overtaking another so as to touch any part of it, makes a "bump." Both boats lay to out of the way of those behind, and on the following day the "bumping" boat takes its station above the "bumped," and tries to overtake the next boat, and so on through the six days of the races. With this explanation the reader will, I trust, understand the particular races I am about to describe.

At two o'clock on one of those damp, "muggy" days, which are only too common in Oxford, the St. Anthony's crew, clad in white flannel trimmed with the college colours, walked down to the barge for their "preliminary paddle." Flags flying on all the barges, and the bran-new uniforms of the various crews, made the scene gay in spite of the sombre hue of the sky; but the faces of the men, anxious even to paleness, showed that there was some serious business on hand.

"Now then, tumble in, you fellows," shouted Baxter; "you'll want time to breathe between the paddle and the race."

That paddle did us a world of good in keeping our thoughts off the coming race; but when it was over, we had still a quarter of an hour to wait before rowing down to the start. It was a terrible quarter of an hour for me, for being stroke of the boat, I felt as if the whole responsibility lay on my shoulders, and as the minutes—hours they seemed—went on, the deep red spot in my cheek grew deeper and deeper, and a sort of shuddering came over me, till my teeth seemed to rattle in my head. We all tried to laugh and chaff as usual, but it was a ghastly attempt, and we gave it up as if by mutual consent.

"Time to start," sung out Tip at last, and out we came to the boat's side with right good will. "Where's Number Two? That fellow's always late; has anybody seen him?"

"He was loafing down the bank five minutes ago," said Hilton.

"Then why the deuce didn't you bring him back? You'll all be late at the start, and have to row up in your coats."

Two or three men were despatched to find the missing one, but minute after minute went by, and he did not come. Hallett and Baxter had gone down to the start, and Tip, left in charge, was wild.

"Ten minutes to three; you won't be down in time; the first gun fires at three; all the boats are off, except Brasenose, now. Confound that fellow Vere!" and Tip was proceeding to use still stronger language when Vere, looking wonderfully unconcerned, made his appearance.

"I am afraid I'm rather late," he began.

"Late! I should think you were; where the deuce have you been? But never mind now; jump in, and let's get off, we've no time to lose." And off we went.

We had to row pretty fast, for it was nearly a mile to our starting-post, and, as Tip said, there was no time to be lost. The first gun fired just before we reached our post, and when we did we had still to turn, and it is no easy thing to turn a boat fifty feet long without a keel, and with no room to spare. At last we were safely round, and lying under the bank, a good deal out of breath from the row down and the fear of being too late.

"Two minutes gone," sung out our timekeeper on the bank, and the words were echoed all along the line of boats. "Plenty of time," said Hallett, who held the stern-rope, ready to pay it out at the last minute. "Keep your heads, and do exactly what I tell you; and mind, no one else says a word. Baxter, be ready to shove her off in the bows." It took a great deal to make Hallett nervous. "Three minutes gone."

"Take your coats off," said Hallett again. We

flung our coats to the men on the bank, and made ready for the struggle with scarcely a word. "Now shove her out and pass her up a little: steady: that will do. The wind's blowing on shore; mind you keep those stroke-oars clear of the bank, Baxter."

"Four minutes gone," shouted the timekeeper, and at the same instant came the crack of the second gun, that sent the blood back to my heart. "Steady now, all; don't look out of the boat."

"Five seconds gone." "Keep her well out, Baxter."

"Ten seconds gone—15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40." "Paddle up, all—gently—steady now"—"45, 50." "Look out, Baxter, she's drifting in again"—"51, 52." "Get forward, all, and look out for the flash. Shove her out, Baxter, for heaven's sake!"—"55," and the bows of the boat were pointing in shore. Baxter, in desperation, plunged into the water, and, seizing one of the oars, shoved us out only just in time. "58, 59." I heard no more. We were off, that was all I knew, and the race had begun. For the first few strokes I was unconscious of everything, even of the shouts on the bank; but my senses soon came back, and I began to realise the work cut out for me. The shouting on the bank was tremendous, lulling sometimes for a moment, and then swelling again into a loud, confused roar.

"You're gaining now," was the first clear sound I heard. It was Baxter's stentorian voice. "Quicken up, stroke, and you'll catch them under the willows."

I quickened, and the shouts on the bank told me we were getting nearer and nearer; but Oriel put on a fresh spurt, and though we continued to gain, it was but slowly. "Well rowed, St. An-

thony's! You're gaining again! Give it to her! Well rowed!" Still there was no bump: the excitement that had stimulated us was cooling now, and the work began to tell. My wind seemed utterly gone, and I felt as if I could give up the race, anything rather than go on at this killing pace.

We were under the willows now; my arms seemed giving way, and my heart died within me, as I thought of the distance we had yet to row. But then came the thought of the glory of a bump, and I said to myself, "Now, Maynard, my boy, only three minutes more; die rather than shut up;" and with that my wind seemed to come back, and I put on another spurt with all the strength I had. The crew picked it up well, and little Wingfield in the stern urged us on with all his might. "Stick to it! You must do it now! Lay it on! Now for it!" he cried, and then stuck his whistle between his teeth and blew with a will. That was the signal for our final effort. I set my teeth and tugged as I had never tugged before; the voices on the bank grew louder and more confused, our oars went slashing through the water, and our boat tossed like a cork in the wash of the boat before us. "Three strokes more, and you're into them," shouted Wingfield. There was a loud roar on the bank, a slight shock through the boat, an "Easy all" from Wingfield, and all was over. We had made our bump, and were happy. I would not have exchanged places that minute with any man you like to name. Never before, and never since, have I felt anything like the calm triumphant happiness of rowing back to our barge with Oriel behind us, and the cheers of half the river ringing in our ears. And then

what heroes we were as we stepped out of the boat! The cheering, the patting on the back, the almost hugging that we got! O, it was worth millions!

"Stroke, my lad," said Hallett, "you rowed like a *man*." "Like three men, you mean," put in Baxter, who was greatly excited. "It was a grand race; your spurt at the top willow was simply splendid. Come along, old boy, you must be awfully pumped; come and sit down; you're the pluckiest little brick I know."

That night, when dinner was over, a crowd gathered on the hall steps, and Hallett, with a huge silver cup in his hand, that one which reminded us of our triumphs at Henley, came out, and drank "To the health of the gallant Torpid;" and then such cheers rang out as it would have been worth your while to hear. And so the first day of the races came to an end. That was the great day for us: we bumped two more boats, but neither of them gave us such a race as the one I have described, and we ended second on the river.

"By Jove," said Tip triumphantly, as we walked up to College after the last race, "we haven't been so high on the river for five years; won't we have a rattling bump-supper, and no mistake!"

CHAPTER III.

A BUMP SUPPER.

Oxford suppers in general are of a very festive character. Breakfasts, even with the addition of champagne, are dull in Oxford, as everywhere else; "wines" are solemn festivals, usually unfestive; but suppers are thoroughly enjoyable. At supper stiffness and restraint vanish in the steam of whisky punch, and joviality and good feeling are spread around with the fumes of the tobacco. Take an illustration. Two men of different Colleges meet, we will suppose at wine; they have known each other by sight for two or three years, and have perhaps met once or twice before on similar occasions. They find themselves seated close together with a bottle of port between them. Now watch their behaviour. They eye one another furtively for the first five minutes, then one ventures a remark; very gradually they enter into conversation, and as the port circulates discuss the merits of the 'Varsity and the Derby favourites with tolerable warmth and freedom. But next day they will probably meet and pass one another with the same furtive glance with which they met the evening before. Now let those men face each other at the supper-table; let them applaud the same speeches, join in the same choruses,

drink of the same liquor, and smoke the same tobacco, and you will see them presently hobnobbing together, proposing each other's health, and shaking hands over "Auld Lang Syne," as if they had been "chums" from their youth up; and if they meet next day, there will be a greeting between them of some sort, not perhaps a cordial "Hail-fellow-well-met," but a quiet nod of recognition at any rate.

So suppers alone deserve to be called festive, and therefore, to celebrate a College success and express College joy, what so proper and so effective as a College supper? Such was always the feeling in St. Anthony's, and now that our Torpid had so far distinguished itself as to make three bumps, and rise to the second place on the river, a Bump Supper was a matter of course.

However, we always did these things in a constitutional way at St. Anthony's; so Hallett called a meeting, and proposed that the College should do honour to the Torpid crew by giving them a supper, which was unanimously agreed to.

"I propose, then," said Hallett, "that we ask Mr. Macleane if he will be good enough to cater for us; he knows what a good supper means better than most of us, and we shall be sure to have our liquors of the right sort if Mr. Macleane has the choosing of them."

Macleane expressed his willingness to accept the honourable task, and intimated privately to his immediate neighbours that he would back himself at evens to name the vintage of any wine they liked to put before him, and that champagne and Moselle were his peculiar forte.

"We must leave the amount of expenditure to

Mr. Macleane," went on Hallett, "and when we know what it is, share it amongst us. I hope everyone in the College will subscribe, and come to the supper, and help to make it as jolly a one as possible."

So the matter was settled, and Macleane set to work to make arrangements with great gusto.

St. Anthony's was not a large College; we had rather over sixty men, and some four or five of these belonged to the species known in Oxford by the name of "smugs," a race of which specimens exist in every College in Oxford, and which is not likely at present to become extinct.

They are a race who live apart, as far as Oxford life permits, and appear to take an interest in nothing particular, and certainly not in things in general. They have not, as far as can be ascertained, any object in life, nor can it be conjectured what object they were intended to serve, especially in Oxford. They are observed usually to herd together, to wear hair and beards of an eccentric pattern, and attire of an uncertain period, varying in tint from black to snuff colour. St. Anthony's, I say, was blessed with four or five of these curious creatures, and of course bumps and bump suppers were things of no interest to them. However, Hallett thought that on such an occasion they ought at least to be invited, so Macleane went round and asked them. He came back to Hallett in a state of great disgust.

"Confound those fellows!" he said. "Why the deuce did you send me to such infernal holes for? I never was in any of them before, or I wouldn't have gone. Why, I've just been to that fellow Daniels, and there he is sitting, Daniel in the den

of lions; that is, of course there are no lions, but there's a monkey, and an owl, and two mongrel puppies, and the den's a perfect copy of the original, and ugh! the smell!"

"Well, he's the worst," replied Hallett; "they're not all as bad as that; but what did he say?—is he coming?"

"Coming? No, of course he isn't. I rapped out the invitation as fast as I could, for I couldn't stand the monkey; but he said 'Much obliged, but he didn't go to suppers, and he didn't take an interest in boating.' So I said, 'Thank you,' and bolted, and I'll lay heavy odds he never sees me in the doorway again."

"Well, you've done your duty at any rate," said Hallett with a quiet chuckle.

"Yes, and some works of super—what d'ye call 'em into the bargain. I'll tell you what," said Macleane, as they parted, "it's my opinion that the existence of Smugs throws considerable light on the question of the origin of species; they're a much better link between man and brute than the gorilla."

It was at first settled that leave should be asked to have the supper in the hall; but as the Smugs were not coming, and as four or five men who had failed two or three times before in "Smalls," being anxious to avoid a similar mishap again, had also reluctantly declined to be present, Macleane thought that, on the whole, the thing would be more enjoyable if held in his own rooms, the largest in College.

Accordingly, on the appointed evening, a little before nine o'clock, about fifty men wended their way to Mr. Macleane's rooms, prepared to "make a night of it.

The room in which we were to be entertained was large, but not lofty; the walls panelled with oak, with two bayed and mullioned windows on two sides of the room, curtained with red. On the walls were some of the popular prints of the day, with several of a sporting character, and a portrait of Mr. Macleane's favourite hunter, with that gentleman, in unexceptionable pink and tops, on his back. At one end of the room over the mantelpiece was a large mirror; at the other end was a sort of trophy of the chase, consisting of a fox's mask and two brushes, surmounting a huge pair of bison's horns, about which whips, hunting-crops, spurs, &c., gracefully dangled. Tables were stretched along the four sides of the room, leaving room at two corners for the "scouts" in attendance to pass to and fro between the outer door and the inner room. Just inside the latter was posted the band, variously known as Tyrolese, Polish, and German, under the direction of the renowned Schlappoffski. Oysters, lobsters, beef, pies, fowls, and all sorts of cold eatables of a substantial nature covered the tables, and bottles of champagne and Moselle stood sentry over every dish ready to let fly and announce that the attack had begun.

"Come up here, my lad," sung out Baxter, as I entered the room, and was proceeding to take a humble place among some other freshmen: "all the Torpid sit up here, and I want you by me." He was seated on Hallett's right in the middle of the longest table, which was the place of honour. "It's the first supper you've been at, isn't it?" said Baxter. "Well, I'll give you a bit of advice. Don't drink too much porter with your oysters, beware of punch, and stick to the 'fiz.'"

"Fiz?" I said inquiringly.

"Yes, fizzing liquors, you know; they don't leave headache and 'hot coppers' behind, which punch does."

"Hot coppers?" I said again.

"Well, my infant, as the French say, you *are* fresh. Don't you know how your mouth feels in the morning after a little too much smoke and liquor the night before? No, of course you don't, but you will to-morrow, I daresay. You smoke, don't you?"

"Yes, a little."

"Ah! well, make the most of your weed: you'd be uncomfortable if you didn't smoke at all, and you'll be still more uncomfortable if you smoke too much."

I could see that Wingfield, who sat a little way down the other side of the table, was taking in these observations of Baxter's with all his ears, and evidently determining to make the most of them for his own use.

"Are all the Torpid here?" inquired Hallett. "We won't wait for anybody else."

"All here now," replied Vere as he entered, as usual the last man.

"Well," exclaimed Tip, "I thought Mr. Vere would be in time to-night for once."

"Yes, I am *Ver*e-y late," returned Vere quietly, "but you see——"

"Well, gentlemen," interposed Hallett, "as everybody's here, we may as well fall to."

The hint was taken at once, and oysters, lobsters, &c., began to vanish at a marvellous rate. Then commenced the popping of corks, much resembling the "file-firing from the right of companies" with

which Volunteers are familiar. The band struck up, and so did chaff and laughter from all sides, and between that and the clatter of knives and forks, the jingling of glasses, and the firing of corks, the table was soon in something like a roar.

"Robert!" shouted Baxter to one of the scouts who was rushing about with champagne in a state of the most gleeful excitement, "Robert, you old duffer, come here."

"Yes, sir," returned Robert, putting his hand to his ear to catch the order in the midst of the din.

"Ask Mr. Percy to take wine with me," shouted Baxter.

Off went old Robert with another grin.

"Mr. Percy, sir,—Mr. Baxter—pleasure of a glass of wine, sir."

"All right," said Tip, filling his glass; "health, old fellow!"

Thereupon the rest of the room followed suit; everybody drank to everybody else, and "Pleasure of a glass of wine," "Looks towards you," "Health, old fellow," "Here's to you," &c., went across the tables in every direction for the next ten minutes. By this time we had nearly appeased our appetites, and were ready for a song, so, while the relics of the feast were being cleared away, Schlappoffski, or as he was familiarly called, "Slap," came forward, and sang, in broken English, one of the popular comic songs of the day, which was vociferously applauded, chiefly because everybody wanted an opportunity to make as much noise as possible. By the time it was over, the punch was on the table, steaming hot, and spreading that soothing and delicious fragrance which makes it the most seductive

of all liquors that rejoice the heart of man. Boxes of cigars, pipes, and jars of tobacco also made their appearance; and when each man had lit his pipe or his weed, and filled his glass, Hallett rose to propose the first toast of the evening.

"Gentlemen," said Hallett, "I take it for granted that we all wish good health to the Queen and her royal family [hear, hear], so I shall proceed forthwith to propose the principal toast of the evening, I mean our gallant Torpid [cheers and energetic rattling of glasses on the table, and heels on the floor, continued for some minutes]. I've seen a good many Torpids in my time," said Hallett, "but I never saw any for pluck and perseverance and real good training to beat the St. Anthony's Torpid of this year [Renewed cheers, rattling of glasses, and thunder of heels]. We had our usual 'St. Anthony's luck' at the beginning of term. We lost some of the men we had reckoned on, and had to put new men into the boat; but by dint of their own hard grind, the crew came to be one of the best on, and you've all seen the result [cheers and noises as before]. I'm sure no one who saw those three bumps, especially that glorious one on the first day [Hurrah and tremendous cheering], will ever forget it: I shall not for one. We shall never forget Bow's form, his straight back, and his easy finish; he's the prettiest oar I've seen, except dear old Thornhill [Loud hear, hear, during which Bow was smitten on the back by everybody within reach]; and we won't forget old 'Two' [hear, hear], how he was always late ['Ha, ha,' all round and a quiet smile from Vere], and how, when we did get him into the boat, he did his work from

end to end, and was never known to shirk [cheers]; and we won't forget how 'Three' tried for a month to get his back straight, and did it at last ['Bravo, Three!']; and how 'Four' was rather lazy in training, but came out strong in the races [cheers, and 'So you did, Four, my boy']; and we won't forget how 'Five's' oar came through with a 'rug' that made the water foam [great cheering], and 'Six' looked as if he meant to pull the boat by himself, and 'Seven' with his long back and broad chest, reaching out, and picking up the time like clockwork [cheers]; and, if we forget everybody else, there's one man we'll remember, and that's 'Stroke' [cheers—glasses and heels at it again, while Baxter patted me on the back with such warmth that I was obliged to remonstrate]. He was a freshman this term," continued Hallett, "but I don't mind saying, that his steady rowing and plucky spurts would have done credit to the oldest oar in Oxford, and I hope to see him some day in the winning boat on the Putney water [loud hear, hear, and 'Well rowed, Stroke']; and now, gentlemen, though last, and I'm bound to say, *least*, we won't forget our cox. [Cheers, at which Wingfield did not attempt to conceal his gratification.] He's a freshman, too, and I think for the first month, as usual with a new cox., he got, so to speak, 'more kicks than halfpence:' however, he stuck to it, and I'll say, with all due deference to Mr. Percy ['All right, old fellow,' from Tip], that in six months' time he'll be as well able to take a boat from Putney-bridge to the Ship at Mortlake as any cox. on the Oxford river [Hear, hear, and cheers]. And now, gentleman, that we've cheered them all separately, let's cheer

them all in a lump. Here's to the St. Anthony's Torpid and the three bumps."

All stood up, glass in hand, except the heroes of the toast: the band struck up and everybody sang "For they are jolly good fellows," &c., which was succeeded by tremendous volleys of cheers, in which the scouts, headed by old Robert, joined with all their lungs. Then everybody tossed off his punch, and "No heel-taps" was the cry all round. "Stroke, my boy, your health," "Stroke, health, old fellow," "Five, your health," "Cox.," "Wingfield," "Stroke," "Maynard," "Bow, health, old boy," and so on till the men dropped down one by one into their seats, and there was something like a calm once more.

"Beg to call on Mr. Macleane for a song," said Hallett, rising immediately.

"Hear, hear," from all sides, and Macleane, after a good deal of encouragement from his immediate neighbours, and pulls at the punch, gave us "A-hunting we will go" with great vigour, warming up, as we joined him in the chorus, flourishing his glass in one hand, and his pipe in the other, and shouting "For a-hunting we will go, my boys, a-hunting we will go," in a state of the greatest enthusiasm, finishing up at last with a "View-holloa" of the most vigorous description.

After that I found I had to return thanks, which turned out easier than I had expected, and then everybody called out "Now then, Macleane, it's your call."

"I know," said Macleane; "I think I can't do better than call on the celebrated comic singer, Mr. Vere, for a song."

"Hear, hear," shouted Baxter; "he's awfully good," he added aside to me; "beats Mackney and those fellows all to nothing. Now then, Vere, strike up, old man."

So Vere, with a very dismal face, began an extremely comic song, which sent me into fits of laughter, and gave Baxter inexpressible delight. I forget what the song was, but I know there were some imitations of a grandmother and four or five children that were intensely amusing. As soon as it was over we struck up the inevitable chorus well known to every Oxford man—

> "Jolly good song, jolly well sung,
> Jolly companions every one;
> Put on your nightcaps, keep yourselves warm,
> A little more liquor will do you no harm."

Then more toasts were proposed, and more songs sung. "The Cricket Club," "The Eight," "The "Hunting Interest," "The Volunteers," "The men who had taken honours in the Schools," all had their turn. At last Baxter gave "The Ladies," in terms of the highest gallantry, which was greeted with "Here's a health to all good lasses," &c.

Before it was over, Macleane, who had had rather more punch than his head would carry, was on his legs to return thanks.

"Gentlemen," said Macleane, in an impressive tone, "being—I venture to think—a general favourite with the fair sex,—"

"Sit down, you old ass," said Tip, who sat near him; "who asked you to return thanks?"

"Mr. Tip," rejoined Macleane, in a tone of serious rebuke, "your conduct is unladylike, I mean un—"

"Now do go to bed, there's a good fellow."

"Gentlemen!" continued Macleane, ignoring the last remonstrance, "Mr. Tip—considers that I ought not—to return—to return to the subject: but, gentlemen, the ladies—being—if I may sho speak, our own—our guiding stars, will—do—can—"

At this point the door opened, and a head wearing a long nose, and sharp, though fishy eyes, was thrust in. It was Dick Harris, the College messenger. The head was immediately assailed with missiles from all parts of the room.

"Get out, Dick, what the deuce do you want?"

"O, let's have him in," said Baxter. "Here, Dick, have some grog."

"Thankee, sir," and Dick polished off a tumbler of strong punch in a way that showed that it was no new beverage to him.

"Now then, Dick, said Baxter, "let's see if you know the article on Predestination."

"No, no," interposed Hallett, "let's have a bit of Cicero. Go on; let's hear you pitch into Catiline."

Dick began at once, with great emphasis and volubility, "How long, O Catiline, will you abuse our patience?" &c., and went on for about half a page.

"That's enough, Dick; now let's see if you can return thanks for the ladies; Mr. Macleane can't quite manage it."

"All right, sir. Gentlemen, whenever I hear speak of returning thanks for the ladies, I always think as how I ought to return thanks for my old woman at home. She's a sort of a Rebecca to me,

you know, gentlemen, and I hope I ain't a bad Isaac; whenever she knows as there's going to be a festive meeting, like this 'ere, in College, says she to me, 'Dick,' she says, 'I hope you won't go to forget yourself.' ["And you never do," ironically from Baxter.] And I never do, sir, and when I go home, as it might be now, you know, sir, she says, 'Ah, Dick,' she says, 'what a blessin' it is as you always come 'ome sober [O, O! and laughter: for Dick was generally "overcome" twice a week at least]; and so you see, gentlemen, I know the valyer of the ladies, and, as the ladies stands up for me, I stands up for them, and—beg pardon, gentlemen," said Dick, changing his tone, "the Dean sends his compliments, and he hopes you won't keep it up no longer, for it's near two o'clock, and he can't get to sleep, he says."

"O, hang the Dean." "Ask him in." "Tell him to put another nightcap on," were the exclamations all round.

"Well, I suppose it's about time we broke up," said Hallett; "we'll have one more jolly good chorus, and then stop. What shall it be?"

"'A-hunting we will go,'" said Macleane.

"No, no, can't do better than 'Auld Lang Syne,' as usual," said Baxter. "Come on: 'Should auld acquaintance be forgot?'"

And off we went at the top of our voices, while Macleane, with his accompaniment of tumbler and pipe, stuck manfully to "A-hunting we will go."

And then we all retired, some by straight, some by rather crooked paths, to our respective rooms. I believe my footsteps wavered a little when I got into the cold night air; but I walked upstairs, lit my

candle, and wound up my watch without much difficulty, so I suppose my head was not particularly muddled. But next morning I knew the meaning of "Hot coppers," and had no reason to regret that Bump Suppers were a comparative rarity.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW WINGFIELD STEERED THE OXFORD EIGHT, AND BAXTER ROWED "FIVE."

On the morning after the bump-supper above described, I was loafing round the Quadrangle, not feeling inclined, after the excitement of the previous evening, to do anything particular, when I met Hallett walking rapidly from the direction of the College-gate, and looking as if he were on some rather important business.

"O, Maynard," he said, "have you seen Baxter this morning? I daresay the lazy beggar's in bed."

"O no," I replied; "I met him just now going to breakfast with Vere on a red-herring and soda-water. He said he smoked a little too much last night, and a red-herring and tea, with soda-water to follow, always set him up better than anything else."

"Hallett," shouted a voice, which could belong to none but Baxter; and at the same moment a soda-water cork hit me smartly on the shoulder. We looked up and beheld Baxter and Vere, leaning, each with his elbows resting on a red cushion, from a window on the first-floor above us.

"O, you're there, are you?" said Hallett; "I've got some news for you."

"Come up here and tell it, then. Come along,

Maynard; you want some soda-water awfully, I can see."

Up we went accordingly. Vere produced some more tumblers and soda-water, which we proceeded to uncork.

"Well, now, old man," inquired Baxter, "what's up?"

"The soda-water for one," put in Vere, as the cork of the bottle he held flew up to the ceiling, followed by the contents.

"Why," returned Hallett, with a passing smile at Vere's little joke, "I've just been strolling round the Parks, and met the gallant president of the O. U. B. C.* He said he was just coming to speak to me about you. He wants to try you in the 'Varsity to-day instead of Pulteney."

"By—Jove! you don't mean that, old fellow?"

"Yes; he says Pulteney's no more use than a corpse: they were loth to give him up, because he's a big man and rows in fair form; but they've come to the conclusion at last that he doesn't pull much more than the weight of his boots."

"Ah, Tip told me the same thing after he steered them yesterday. Hang it, I wish I hadn't drunk so much soda-water; I shall be as weak as a baby when I get into the boat. Vere, you treacherous old serpent, it's your fault. Here I've had a chance given me of aquatic distinction, and your soda-water, sir, has robbed me of the golden prospect."

"Yes," said Vere, in a tone of deep contrition, "and has even gone so far as to take away your 'coppers.'"

"Well, I'm going off to grind," said Hallett;

* Oxford University Boat Club.

"you'll be down at the river by half-past two, Baxter?"

"All right, my lad, I'll be there; and if I don't pull the weight of my boots—double-soled clumps, mind—and a pound or two over, I'll shoot myself to death with soda-water corks."

So Baxter rowed "Five" that day, and though his style was a little rough, and the debauch of the night before had, to use his own expression, "played old Harry with his internal arrangements," Singleton, the president, saw that, when the day of the race came, the new "Five" would do good service for the dark-blue. The Eight had been already a few days in training, but it still wanted more than a month to the race-day, so that there was plenty of time for minor improvements of style; and, as Baxter went into training with a determination to do all he knew for his 'Varsity, it was not long before his "feather" came down to the level of the rest of the crew, and his time was pronounced right as clockwork; and we of St. Anthony's felt very proud of our man, as we watched him with his great chest coming down between his knees for the stroke, and going back with a long swing like a sledge-hammer. For myself, I know that when I heard an old University oar say to a friend on the bank, "By Jove! that man Five does more work than the rest of the boat put together," I walked firmer on the ground for a week, and felt that to be a St. Anthony's man was among the highest privileges of this life.

Tom Percy, *alias* "T. P.," *alias* "Tippy," *alias* "Tip," had, as I mentioned before, steered the Oxford crew of the previous year; and as he had not increased more than three or four pounds in weight,

it was a matter of course that he should be the coxswain for this year also. One Saturday, when the Eight had been in training about a fortnight, Tip, who was a great lover of racquets, and liked to test the skill of every freshman who knew anything of the game, invited me to play with him. When we had played five games, four of which I lost, and were performing ablutions after the exercise, Tip said in his sharp way, "What are you going to do now? Come and ride: the Eight don't want me this afternoon, they've got old Parkes to steer them: it's the last holiday I shall have, too, for they go into the racing-boat on Monday, and I shall be wanted every day then. There, no humbug about grinding for smalls," he continued, putting on his coat and hooking his arm into mine; "we'll get a couple of nags at Joe Tollitt's, and I'll show you some of the country: he's got a little brown mare that suits me to a hair."

Accordingly after lunch to Joe Tollitt's we went. Tip was much chagrined to find that the little brown mare was out; however, there were plenty of less attractive animals to pick from, and we were soon mounted on two of those rakish-looking, stick-at-nothing steeds that Oxford knows so well. Tip's notion of showing the country was to keep as far as possible from the high roads, and never to ride for more than ten minutes in the same direction. By carrying out this plan, what with interesting fences and exciting gallops, we soon lost all count of time; and it was not till Percy's horse had refused three fences in succession that we began to think of returning.

"I say," said Tip suddenly, "it strikes me we

ought to be getting back, the nags have had enough: I wonder where the deuce we are."

"'Oxford six miles,'" replied I, quoting the finger-post, as we came out at four cross-roads.

"I have to dine with the Eight at six," said Tip, "and it's a quarter past five now, and we have to take the horses back and dress: touch your mare up a bit; we must quicken the pace; we shall be awfully late as it is."

By dint of constant stimulus we managed to put our horses along at something like the required pace, and were beginning to think we should not be very late after all, when, coming sharply round a corner, Percy's horse stumbled and fell, throwing his rider as heavily as seven stone ten can fall, into the road. By pulling my mare on to her haunches I barely avoided riding over him. Tip's horse was up directly; perhaps it was not his first adventure of the kind; but not so Tip. He lay perfectly still on his face for a minute or so, and I thought we should never hear our coxswain's sharp little voice again; but he came to directly, and then I asked him if he was much hurt. "Cracked my arm," he replied; "get me to some farm-house, if you can, my lad." Though he spoke in something like his old authoritative tone, I could see he was faint with pain. What was I to do? It would not do to set off with the little man in my arms in search of a hospitable farmer, leaving the two horses to their own devices; so at last I was fain to lay Tip with his saddle under him against the bank at the roadside, and set off on my own horse to fetch assistance. I was not long in finding a couple of farm-labourers to help me, and between us we brought both Percy and the

horses to a comfortable homestead in the neighbourhood. In less than an hour we had found a surgeon; the arm was set, the head bandaged up, and Tip declared himself to be "as right as ninepence." "This knocks my steering on the head, though," he continued in a doleful tone.

"Come," interposed the surgeon, "you'll have the goodness to go to sleep, sir, and don't talk about steering till I've steered you through this little business; and, Mr. Maynard, I'll thank you to be off and tell the story to your friends at St. Anthony's."

It was past eight when I reached the College. I went first to Baxter's rooms, and found him just returned from dining with the Eight, and lighting his lamp in preparation for the severest of grinds.

"I'm afraid I'm disturbing you," said I.

"O, no, young 'un, come in; I'm just preparing for an enlightened study of the Nicomachean Ethics by the help of Mr. Browne's translation; a regular *Browne* study, in fact, as Vere would say; but I'm not in harness yet—coat to change, slippers, and general derangement of dress to come; so sit down: take the easy-chair."

"Thanks, I won't stay five minutes; but I've got something to tell you. I've been out for a ride with Percy."

"And got spilt, eh?" said Baxter. "I thought by your look there was something up."

"No, not exactly," I replied, "but Percy has come rather to grief—broken his arm."

"You don't mean that? Poor dear little Tip! Where is he now?"

"I've left him in good hands at a farmer's three miles off on the Banbury road. He didn't seem to

care much, excepting that, as he said, it's all up with his steering for this year."

"Yes, by Jove!" exclaimed Baxter, "and I don't know where the 'Varsity will find another cox. The men who steered the trial Eights are no good; neither of them knows even how to keep his lines taut, much less steer on a broad water like the Thames. I tell you what, I shouldn't wonder if our little Tom Thumb, what's his name——?"

"Wingfield?" said I.

"Yes, to be sure, Wingfield. Ever since that little ducking he got, he's steered splendidly. I'll speak to Singleton to-morrow, and get him tried at any rate. Now, young 'un, I think I must trouble you to be off, for it's time I tackled the venerable Stagirite. You'd better let Hallett know all about poor Tip."

"Yes; I'll go to him at once."

"Ah, do. Good-night."

"Good-night."

Next day Wingfield was tried as coxswain, as well as one or two others, who were considered likely men; and for three or four days it was not settled who should fill the vacant seat in the stern of the boat. Wingfield, meantime, was fluttering between exultation at having steered the 'Varsity even for a day, and the fear lest he should be rejected after all. At last, after steering the Eight over the long course one day, he said to me, "Tell you what, Maynard, they really ought to have me after my steering to-day: don't laugh; I tell you I *know* Tom Percy couldn't have taken them better. What are you grinning at? You old duffer, you don't know good steering when you see it. Here's Baxter; I'll just ask him.

Now, Baxter, wasn't my steering first-rate to-day?"

"Well, I suppose it must have been," returned Baxter, 'for I have just had orders to tell you you're to be cox. of the Eight."

"Hurrah! I told you so, Maynard. I knew I steered well. Hurrah!" And off the small man went, in a joyous trot, that expressed better than any words the height of his glee and exultation.

Having lived in the country all my life till I came to St. Anthony's, and my interest in the Oxford and Cambridge race never having gone beyond betting "3 to 2 in tizzies" with my chums at school, I had never yet had the luck to witness what the daily papers always call "the struggle for the blue ribbon of the Thames." Now, however, I felt that to see The Race was one of the necessaries of life; and accordingly, I availed myself of a general invitation, given me long ago by one of my uncles, to spend the week but one before Easter at his house at Kensington.

The Eight had been three days on the London water when I reached town, on the Monday before the race. Next day I ran down to Putney to see how things were going on, and saw our boat come in, after rowing the whole course. There was a little knot of men waiting to see the crew step ashore—two or three newspaper correspondents, University men, watermen, and a few others. It was curious to see the different ways the men had of getting out of the boat. Stroke and Bow tried, without much success, to look as if a four-mile row were to them a mere bagatelle; "Three" and "Four," on the other

hand, sat for a minute or two with their heads sunk down to their knees, as though they never meant to row again, and then rose slowly, and walked off with the air of martyrs who felt that they were sacrificing their lives by inches on the altar of patriotism. As for Baxter, he hitched up his trousers in a subdued way, and tumbled out anyhow, with two or three puffs and snorts, and without the least regard for appearances; while Wingfield displayed in every motion a deep sense of his dignity and responsibility as Coxswain of the Oxford Eight.

"Hallo, young 'un!" exclaimed Baxter suddenly, as his eye fell upon me, "are you there? Come to see your friends perform, eh?"

"Yes," said I; "how do you get on?"

"All right, as far as I'm concerned: Three and Four have been rather seedy the last day or two; but they'll be fit enough by Saturday."

"And what about Cambridge?" I inquired.

"O, they came to town yesterday: you'll see them come in directly; they're disgustingly good this year. They say their Stroke's a man of undying pluck—so's our man, for that matter; hard as nails, and the coolest oar out. It will be a ve-ry tough race, you'll see."

"May I ask, sir, what your time was to-day?" said one of the gentlemen of the Press, addressing Baxter, note-book in hand.

"Fifteen minutes twenty seconds, on a slack tide," replied Baxter promptly, with a scarcely perceptible wink at me.

"Indeed, sir; thank you. And what should you consider to be the betting now, sir?"

"Three to one on Oxford."

"Indeed, sir; thank you; much obliged. Good-day, sir."

"We shall see all that in one of the penny papers to-morrow morning," said Baxter: "you wouldn't think he could take all that in, would you? Just shows how much those fellows' information is good for: they get crammed up with some startling particulars now and then."

Wingfield, who had been superintending, as he thought himself in duty bound, the removal of the boat to its shelter for the night, now joined us.

"How do, Maynard?" he said, with a lively nod. "Baxter, get away and wash; don't stand there, catching your death of cold; I'll tell Maynard all about everything. Now go on, there's a good fellow."

"All right, Tommy; I'm off. By-by, my lad," to me; and Baxter went off to wash, as he was bid. It was clear that a change had taken place in the relations of the small to the big man: the former had become—at least in his own estimation—an absolute but beneficent ruler; the latter a sober-minded and submissive subject. After some conversation with Wingfield, during which he offered me a ticket for the Umpire's boat, and recommended me to go to Evans's either the night before or the night after the race, on account of the splendid row there was sure to be, as if he knew all about it from the experience of a lifetime, we parted, breathing devout wishes for the success of the dark-blue colours on the coming Saturday morning.

Friday evening found me, for the first time in my life, at Evans's, under the protection of Vere, whom I had happened to meet a day or two before

at a cigar-shop in the Strand, buying what he called "Herba Nicotiana, vulgo appellata Tobacco." Most people know what Evans's supper-rooms are like. The room being filled almost entirely with Oxford and Cambridge men, all having their thoughts fixed on the coming race, the excitement soon ran high; and when a well-known singer came forward and gave us a spirited stave, appropriate to the occasion, extolling alternately the dark and light blue, party enthusiasm reached its highest pitch. I was greatly excited myself, and so was Vere; I shall not, therefore, attempt to describe all the events of the evening. My impression is, that a great deal of glass was smashed; that several appeals were made by at least two proprietors (Vere said there was only one); that the waiters had a very bad time of it altogether; and that my hat, when I got out into the street after a severe struggle, had assumed the contour of the "shocking bad" article which adorns the head of the Irish carman.

Fortunately I was not obliged to rise very early next morning, as the race was to start a little before eleven, and I had not far to go. Vere had engaged a horse to ride along the towing-path; so I started by myself, got on board the steamer early, and managed to secure a good place to view the race.

It was a clear sunshiny day, with a light breeze blowing rather cool from the west, and the attendance of spectators, both on land and water, was enormous. Not to mention the steamers, of which there were five or six, mostly crammed almost to sinking-point, the river from Putney bridge to Simmons' boat-house was gay with small craft of all descriptions; cockney crews with the liveliest uniforms and the worst pos-

sible styles of rowing; pale government clerks adventuring their lives, and, still worse, their unexceptionable straw hats in skiffs of frail construction; young tradesmen in their shirt-sleeves and shiny hats toiling in heavy tubs to the admiration of their sweethearts in the stern. Here and there the bright blue of the London Rowing Club or the scarlet of Kingston might be seen in a graceful outrigged four, and one boat, that I particularly noticed, was rowed by four young ladies in blue jackets, straw hats, and white kid gloves, who looked very charming and excited much admiration. The banks were lively too, though not so gay as at some other parts nearer the finish; the ladies were not so numerous here or so well dressed, but the bright faces of the crowd, the bits of colour here and there lighting up the dark masses, as men in various uniforms moved in and out among the throng, with the clear sunlight brightening up the whole, gave things a cheery, holiday look, that calmed to some extent the intense anxiety I was beginning to feel about the issue of the coming race. I could hear from time to time the shouts on the banks, as we dodged about trying to get into our proper position. "Oxford or Cambridge colours threepence."—"I'll give 5 to 4 on Oxford; will any gentleman take 5 to 4?"—"Boat, sir? Here you are, sir—take the three on yer for 'arf-a-crown."—"Want to see the start, sir?—try my little boat, sir."—"*Will* any gentleman take 5 to 4?" &c.

The two boats came out a little after the appointed time, looking very stately and beautiful, as they paddled quietly to their starting-rafts, with cheers rising to greet them on all sides as they moved along. While the usual manœuvring of the refractory steam-

ers was going on, my eyes were fixed on my two friends in the Oxford boat. Baxter looked in splendid condition, but, as time went on, and the start was still delayed, he grew uncomfortable, gripping his oar nervously, hitching up his trousers, and settling himself on his thwart in a way that showed he was far from easy in his mind. Wingfield, on the other hand, sat with his legs tucked in, and his hands tightly grasping the rudder-lines, pale, but looking as though his whole soul and body were bent up to one object, and seeming quite insensible to everything beside. At last "those confounded steamers" were got into something like order, except one dingy low-lived monster, which lay in shore some distance ahead of the rest, and was utterly intractable. Each man in the two crews took a last look round, settled himself for the last time on his thwart, strung himself up, and came forward ready for the stroke: the starter gave the word and both boats sprang off together. The roar that broke forth at once from all sides telegraphed far up the river that the race had begun; the crowd on the bank stood still for a moment, and then began to move in one direction; the small craft became generally excited; the steamers groaned and snorted; while, above all, the cries of "Cambridge!" "Oxford!" rose into the air, sometimes sharp and clear, sometimes blending in one dull surging roar. And so the race swept on, the two slender boats with their long gleaming oars forging on in the midst, and holding their course in spite of heaving waters, insolent steamers, and cockney wherries. For the first dozen strokes they seemed almost dead level, then Cambridge, rowing the faster stroke, began to go slowly ahead. "Cambridge!" "Cambridge!" was the cry,

answered by "Now, Oxford!" "*Ox*ford!" in a tone of remonstrance. But our stroke did not quicken, and still the light-blue kept creeping to the front. At the Soap-works they were half a length ahead, and as we neared Hammersmith, they had drawn clear.

"I'll give 6 to 4 on Cambridge," shouted some-one near me.

"I'll take you," replied a voice that I knew well. I looked round and saw, for the first time, that Hallett was standing within a few yards of me. We exchanged nods, and then turned to, and shouted "Oxford!" vigorously. Then I saw our stroke turn his head and take a look after his foe, and then his broad chest came forward in quicker time, and his oar flashed faster over the water; the boat seemed to start into fresh life, and inch by inch the lost ground was made up, and, amid exulting cries of "O! well rowed, Oxford!" our boat drew up level once more.

"Will you do that 6 to 4 over again, sir?" said Hallett to the man near him.

"Not just now, sir," returned the other in a rather surly tone. "Now, Cambridge!" Cambridge answered the call by another spurt, and began once more to shoot ahead amid tremendous cheering. But our men were not to be denied, spurt answered spurt, and each boat alternately headed the other, while the roars and yells and even shrieks that rose from land and water swelled into a perfect storm. The boats shot Barnes bridge together; less than a mile and the race would be over. Which would win? It was a splendid fight, but the anxiety was almost past bearing. At last the final effort came. The steamers were by this time a good way in the rear, but through a glass I could see that the dark-blue was once more

going to the fore; they were gaining steadily every stroke; they must win.

"Oxford wins!" shouted Hallett, now close beside me, "Oxford!—hurrah! Halloa! look there—what's that? There's a barge coming right across them—they'll be swamped! Why the devil doesn't Wingfield take 'em round? O, d—n it, they'll lose the race! There they go—they must be—no, by Jove! they're just in time—hurrah! it's all right! O, well steered, sir—judged it beautifully—well steered—Oxford wins!"

It had been a very near thing, but the race was safe now, and with cries of "Oxford!" "Oxford!" rising louder and louder from every side, the dark-blue shot past the flag at Mortlake, winners by three lengths.

"Oxford colours threepence, Cambridge colours one penny," were the first words Hallett and I heard, as we stepped ashore at Putney; and didn't I wear my colours proudly all that glorious afternoon! I shall never forget that race, and I don't think anybody who saw it will ever forget it either. In St. Anthony's at least it is "freshly remembered;" and if you want to stir the soul of an old rowing-man of St. Anthony's, ask him if he remembers the year when Wingfield steered and Baxter rowed Five.

CHAPTER V.

THE MAY RACES: "ST. ANTHONY'S LUCK."

NEARLY two years had gone by since the race described in the last chapter, and two years bring great changes in College life. Senior men pass away, and humble members of the Torpid, and the second Eleven rise to be the leading spirits of the College. And on these leading spirits a great deal depends. The reputation of the College on the river, in the cricket-field, perhaps even in the Schools, and certainly in moral tone, rests, to a great extent, with the president of the boat club and the captain of the Eleven. At least it was so in St. Anthony's. The College tutors helped us to win University prizes, and to get "firsts;" but the real character of the College as a whole rose and fell with the character of the senior men. And now, having prepared you, gentle reader, to expect some changes in St. Anthony's, I shall go on with my story, if I may so call these rough and rambling sketches.

Hallett has got his "first," and left the College. He is ordained, and married to a young heiress somewhere in Devonshire. Tip has betaken himself to the law, and is in chambers in the Temple, where he practises forensic oratory upon his clerk, a youth of

fourteen years. I visited him one day, and the clerk having mislaid the lemon intended for our punch, gave an opportunity for the display of Tip's rhetoric.

"May it please your Ludship," he began, with a deferential bow to me, then turning to the chair intended for the reception of clients, as yet in perspective, "Gentlemen of the jury, the prisoner who stands cowering and conscience-stricken in the dock before you, has pleaded guilty to a crime that is, I may truly say, without parallel in the annals of the law — a crime so heinous that it is not provided against by any statute nor even by any precedent in the common law of this realm. This criminal of tender years has poisoned, so to speak, the social glass, for he has robbed it of half its charm. He has roused malignant and vindictive feelings in the breast of his indulgent employer; for what has he done? He has mislaid that employer's lemon. Whether his Lordship will consider this, gentlemen, as a felony, or a petty larceny, or as criminal negligence merely, I cannot tell; but I am sure you will agree with me that it is a gross misdemeanour, and one which would justify his Lordship in visiting the prisoner with the utmost rigour of the law. Get another lemon, you young dog, or I'll sentence you to penal servitude in the coal-hole for the term of your natural life." So much for Tip.

Baxter having been, to the grief of himself and his friends, floored by the examiners for "greats," is still a member of the College, and since Hallett left, has been captain of the boat club, with Vere for secretary. To Wingfield and myself nothing particular has happened, except that we have fallen in love and out again more than once, and our zeal for

boating has grown with our whiskers. It is February now, and rowing is going on in the same business-like way as heretofore. One evening, at the beginning of the month, Baxter gave a wine to certain of his intimate friends, myself among the number. In the middle of the evening Dick Harris appeared—no very uncommon circumstance at a convivial meeting in College.

"A letter for you, sir," said Dick, addressing Baxter, "from India's coral strand, where Greenland's icy mountains roll down their golden sand, you know, sir."

"What d'ye mean?" said Baxter; "you're not screwed at this early period, I hope. It's a precious shaky fist," he continued, glancing at the letter. "Hallo! 'Viâ Marseilles.' Why it can't be, yes, by Jove! it is; it's Charlie Thornhill."

"Hurrah!" said Vere; "let's hear what the dear old boy says."

"Well, he's been ill—fever or dysentery, or something—so he's got leave for a year, and he's coming home. I'll read you a bit of what he says: 'I shall be in England at the end of February, and can't make up my mind whether to go home straight, or to run up to Oxford, and see you all first.'"

"Just like the jolly old brick," said Vere.

"'I've managed to keep up my rowing a little,'" Baxter read on; "'and if I'm not quite out of form, perhaps you could find me a humble place in the Eight once more.'"

"Yoicks! Hark to him there!" broke in Macleane. "That ought to put the steam into you Eightsmen. Won't the St. Anthony's colours cut down the field, and go in winners by any number of

lengths after this! I'll lay an even pony we go head of the river this year."

"Hear, 'ear!" responded Dick Harris, who, not having been yet invited to take his usual glass, was lingering wistfully near the table.

"Hallo, Dick, what are you waiting for?"

"O, just give him a glass of port."

"There you are, Dick. Now then, your sentiment."

"'Ere's the 'ealth of the St. Anthony's Eight," replied Dick promptly, "coupling with it the name of Mr. Thornhill, who is now returning from sojourning in a foreign land to the arms of this venerable College, founded by the pious and munificent Anthony Barnard o' blessed memory, in anno Domini 1495." And with that down went the port, and Dick vanished.

"By George!" exclaimed Baxter, "only let's see Charlie Thornhill's straight back in the boat once more, and I rather think we'll make the ship travel, eh, Maynard?"

"I believe you, my boy!" was my fervent reply, as I left the room.

The summer term came round. Have you ever seen Oxford, reader? Yes, you spent a day there in the autumn; it was a damp, dull day, very likely, with perhaps a quiet drizzle on and off. You thought the place striking, certainly, and unlike any you had seen before, but dreary, dingy, dismal to a degree. Ah, well! come again in May, when the skies are blue and the trees in their bright young green; when the sun throws lights and shadows about the gray old towers and quadrangles, and gleams and glitters on the broad calm river; then, if you don't own yourself

enraptured, you're a—well, I'd rather not say what I think of you. Of course Edinburgh is more romantic, London is grander, Paris is more gloriously gay; but for calm stately beauty, give me Oxford in the month of May.

Ah! none but an Oxford man knows all the bliss of an Oxford May; that time when you dream over your book under the chestnuts in the College garden, or lie on big cushions in a punt moored in a shady creek of the Cherwell, dressed in easy flannels and straw hat, with a mellow Lopez in your mouth; when, in the cool evening, you stroll with the friend of your bosom under the elms along the Broad Walk and watch the moonlight falling on Magdalen tower, and talk romance about that girl with the velvet eyes that you fell in love with in the Easter vac. Yes, none but an Oxford man knows all those blissful moments. And then there are other pleasures still, that are only known to the rowing man. It is pleasant, certainly, to be well in at the wickets, to hit fivers to long-off, and make scientific "draws" to leg, and then to revel in strawberries, and cider-cup, and sherry-cobbler, and those other delicious luxuries that are forbidden to the member of a College Eight; but for real enjoyment of life put me in training. Let me rise bright and early to a cool tub and a fresh walk round the Parks, eat my juicy steak, brown without, rosy within, with a real British appetite. Let a sharp-trotting pony draw me, in the sultry afternoon, to the Magdalen Ground, to watch "Oxford *v.* M.C.C.;" and when the sun gets low give me my daily row with a crew that know their work and do it; let me come in to my frugal supper and my pint of good ale with a sense of having earned it, and

go to bed in the consciousness of full and perfect health, and you may offer me all the Havannahs that ever were smoked, and all the beverages that ever were brewed, from Moselle-cup to gin-sling, and I won't so much as cast a look of love on them. Yes, Oxford in the May Term is a paradise of many pleasures; but to my mind to be in perfect training is the highest of them all.

Well, the summer term came round. Our Eight was in practice, and we were to go into training in a few days; but Thornhill had not yet appeared. He had reached England rather later than was expected, and when he arrived at home his family would not hear of his going to Oxford till after Easter; but he had promised to come and row in the Eight, and we knew he would, family entreaties and every other obstacle notwithstanding. And sure enough, one morning as Baxter and I were at lunch together, the door opened, and Thornhill stood before us. We both uttered a shout of delight, and Baxter rushed to the door.

"Aha, ha, my dear old skipper, how are you? Shake hands, old man, ha, ha!" laughed Baxter, fairly hugging Thornhill in the ecstasy of his joy. "By Jove! I'm so glad to see you. Ha, ha, how are you?" I had never seen Baxter so excited before.

"O! all right," returned Thornhill, as soon as he could speak, for this greeting of Baxter's had touched him not a little. "How are you, Maynard?" he added, shaking me warmly by the hand. "I am so jolly glad to see you again, Baxter, old fellow. You've grown some more whisker, eh? And you're in splendid condition all round, too; it's a treat to look at you."

"Well, I believe I'm pretty well; but you look rather pulled down."

"Do I? Well, two or three fevers, one on top of another, do take off a little of one's extra flesh. You see it was touch and go with me once or twice. However, I'm sound as a bell now, and ready for anything. What about the Eight?"

"Well, I think it will do now we've got our old skipper back. We've not quite settled the stroke-oar yet. Maynard, there, has been performing hitherto; but we agreed that if you felt up to the work, we'd ask you to take it."

"You do me great honour, Baxter, I'm sure," said Thornhill seriously, but evidently highly pleased; "but I've no doubt Maynard is a much better stroke than I should be now. Of course I'm well enough, but then," he added reluctantly, "I've not had much practice lately, and—"

"O," I interrupted, "do let's have you stroke. We shall all row twice as well behind you."

"Yes," said Baxter, "you must try it, old man, at all events."

"Very well," said Thornhill, highly pleased. "I suppose it won't do for a freshman like me to disobey my captain."

"Of course not. Well, that's settled; and now walk into the lunch. Help yourself to sherry."

Thornhill turned out to be as good in a boat as ever; and with his long dashing stroke, we improved so much that by the day the races began we were justly considered the best boat on, and our going head of the river was held on all hands to be "a moral."

"I don't see how you can help it," said an old

'Varsity oar to Thornhill. "Oriel is fishy for head boat; Exeter is only so-so; B.N.C.* must come down; and Trinity will drop into your month the first night: you *must* go head."

"I should say so too," replied Thornhill, "if it were not for our confounded luck. However, we'll see if St. Anthony's pluck can't beat St. Anthony's luck for once. Good-bye, old fellow."

Wednesday, the 21st of May, was the first day of the races, and a magnificent day it was; hot, bright sunshine all the morning, and then, as the sun fell, a cool breeze springing up and making the perfection of a summer evening. Towards seven o'clock crowds of spectators began to pour down to the river, and lined the bank on either side. The barges, with their various flags flying, and filled with ladies in bright and airy costumes, shone gaily in the setting sun, while the brass band of the Volunteers did its best to put everybody in spirits by executing lively music in the liveliest possible manner. Most conspicuous for its array of beauty was the University barge, and conspicuous among that array was a group of four ladies, in whom Thornhill had a particular interest. The group consisted of his mother, his two sisters, and another young and lovely lady, whom Thornhill was to carry with him to India at the end of the year as his "bright and beauteous bride." They were early at the river; and while the crews hung about, waiting for the time to start, Thornhill introduced Baxter and me to his party on the barge. Baxter, who was quite equal to the task of amusing two ladies at least, devoted himself to Mrs. Thornhill and

* Brasenose College.

her eldest daughter, while I did my best to win the good graces of Miss Florence Thornhill. After we had exchanged some preliminary remarks about Oxford, the river, &c., she said, in an abrupt way that I found was natural to her, "Don't you feel very nervous about the race? I do, though I know you'll do well; but Charlie's so made up his mind that you'll be head of the river this year; I do hope he won't be disappointed."

"You can't hope so more than I do, Miss Thornhill; but we've had such bad luck over and over again that there's no knowing where we shall be at the end of the races."

"Head of the river, *I* say," replied Florence Thornhill, as proudly as if she were announcing a triumph already achieved. "I'm sure if you all row as hard as my brother, you can do it; and you will—won't you?"

"I will for one," replied I; and I meant what I said.

"Of course you like Charlie—everybody does; he's so kind-hearted, isn't he? and so 'plucky,' don't you call it?"

"Yes, that's right, Miss Thornhill; he's all pluck every inch of him, and if there ever was a stroke fit to row head of the river, he's the man."

"Yes, yes," said Florence Thornhill eagerly, "and he *will* row head, you'll see; I *know* he will."

"Maynard, my boy," interrupted Baxter, "we must be off—it wants fourteen minutes to seven."

"All right, I'm ready. Good-bye, Miss Thornhill!"

"Good-bye, Mr. Maynard! Mind you row hard and make your bump to-night."

"It won't be his fault if we don't, Miss Thornhill," said Baxter; and in my own mind I hugged him for those words.

Baxter had managed to inveigle Mrs. Thornhill and her eldest daughter out of a glove each on the pretext that they (the gloves), especially Mrs. Thornhill's, would, if worn in his hat during the race, put the steam into him beyond everything. And so he afterwards declared they did, albeit both hat and gloves lay at the bottom of the boat throughout the race.

That first night everything went well; we got a splendid start, and, whether it was the gloves, or Florence Thornhill's words, or Charlie Thornhill's dashing pluck, or all these together, that did it, certain it is that that night our boat "walked the water like a thing of life," overhauled Trinity in the first four hundred yards, and in three minutes after starting the bump was made and we were floating quietly under the bank, watching the struggle of the other boats as they tugged past, with a feeling of calm, triumphant joy not to be described in words—it can only be compared to the bliss of the lover newly accepted by the lady of his love; at least I think that comes nearer to it than anything else. Nevertheless, I must own I found my happiness capable of addition when Florence Thornhill said, her eyes flashing with excitement—

"O, Mr. Maynard, isn't it splendid? Only three more bumps to make, and you'll be head of the river."

"You told us to row hard," said I, "and we did."

"Was it because I told you? Yes, I do believe

it was. I'm so glad, so glad for Charlie's sake, you know—and for yours too," she added, and her eyes seemed to go right through me and come out on the other side: from that moment I felt it would be a privilege to die for her at any minute; in other words, I was in love with Florence Thornhill. But of that hereafter. Love is quite against the rules of training, so whatever I may feel I shall say no more about it till the races are over.

We, the St. Anthony's crew, walked down arm-in-arm to the next evening's race, full of confidence and high spirits. All our friends seemed to smile on us, and we smiled on our friends and on each other, and tried to look friendly at the crews above us, and tried not to look triumphant over those below. Our preliminary paddle promised well; we were all sound, wind and limb, and, as Baxter cheerily remarked, never had we been in better fettle all round than we were by seven o'clock that evening.

"Give us a good start, old fellow," said Thornhill to Macleane, who held our stern-rope, as we lay under the shore waiting for the signal-gun.

"All right, my boy, don't fret yourself, we'll effect a capital start; and, tell you what, just you make the running; cut out the pace at first, stick close to their quarters, and frighten 'em, that's the plan; you'll catch 'em in the Gut."

The minutes went by, told aloud by the time-keeper, and then the seconds, first by tens—then by fives—then one by one, and then—the gun, and we were off. It was a capital start; the boat dragged through the water for the first two strokes, and then sprang off like a racehorse. At once the shouts on the bank told us that we were going into Brasenose

hand over hand. Never had there been such a crowd to cheer us as there was that night, and the roars of triumph hoarse and loud were frightful. "Anthony's!" "Anthony's!" "Well rowed!" "Go on, you fellows!" "Hurrah!" "Well ro-o-owed!"

On we dashed: our boat was tossing in the wash of Brasenose; I could hear their whistle, as the cox. called on his men; we were close upon them,—now for it— Suddenly there was a great lurch through the boat, a shout of horror on the bank, and we seemed to stand still. In a second we knew the reason: Thornhill's oar had snapped. "Throw your weight on the bow oars," I heard him say to Wingfield, and in another instant he had dived into the water. The boat heeled over, and then righted, and we tried to get together once more. It was a desperate case, but we set our teeth, and swore deeply—at least I did—that Trinity should not catch us: they were a long way off, but they began to gain fast now.

"Steady now, and stick to it," sung out Wingfield: and so we did, but still Trinity came on and their nose got nearer and nearer. Saunders's Bridge, they were still a length off. "Steady, Anthony's, and you'll do it!"—"Well rowed, Seven!"—"Keep her steady." And then came the shouts close behind, "Trinity!"—"Now, Trinity!"—"Quicken up!" Trinity spurted hard, and came up like lightning. Our Seven spurted, too, like a man, but the sudden change of stroke threw us all abroad—the boat lurched and staggered horribly, the Trinity bows ran up our stern, Wingfield held up his hand, and it was all over with us.

I did not see Florence Thornhill at all that even-

ing. She was distressed, I heard, almost to tears at the result of the race, so I was glad on the whole that we did not meet. All the next day the crew were in a state of gloomy ferocity, thirsting for vengeance, and we went down to the start in the evening much in the frame of mind of savages starting on a scalping expedition. Short work we made with Trinity, but it was a very stern joy that we felt in bumping them now—the joy of regaining a lost right, not at all like the serene delight that followed the first bump.

Five races more to come, and three bumps to make.

Saturday evening came, and brought a very tough race; but our minds were made up,—the black and yellow colours of Brasenose came down at last, and we rowed in third on the river. Now for Oriel, and then the last tussle of all with those big brawny Exeter fellows, and then the headship of the river, and the smiles of Florence Thornhill. So I prophesied to myself that Saturday night; but Monday evening came and went, and we were no higher than before. We were desperate, and at supper that night there was a council of war, which ended with Baxter saying,

"My dear fellows, if we don't get Oriel to-morrow, I'll put my head in a bag for the rest of my life."

And we did get them; it was tough work, but we did it, and felt like giants refreshed with wine after it was done.

Next evening I walked down to the river with the Thornhills, and Florence said—

"Isn't it the happiest thing in the world to make a bump? It must be so splendid to feel that you've

done something for the honour of your College. I do so wish I could row like you! Can't I do something to help the boat on? Do tell me!"

I should like to have replied, that, if she would then and there intimate that she cared two straws about me, I would undertake to bump Exeter by the prowess of my single arm. What I actually said, however, was stupid and quite inadequate to the occasion:

"If we have your good wishes, as I believe we have, nothing could help us better."

"O, you *know* you have all the good wishes I can think of, but I want to *do* something. Will a vinaigrette be any use?—it might refresh you just before the race, you know;—or, stop,—I'll put some of this eau de Cologne on your handkerchief—that will do you good, I know."

"Dear me! what on earth have I done with my handkerchief?" said I, searching diligently every pocket but the one in which I knew it to be.

"O! never mind," replied Florence Thornhill, "anything will do. Here, I'll put some on mine, and lend it to you. Do you mind?"

As may be supposed, I did not "mind," and received the handkerchief with all reverence and gratitude, like a knight of olden time. O, and it was a potent spell, that little scented handkerchief,—the charm worked well.

Shall I describe the race of that evening? No, I have described too many already;—let Florence Thornhill tell it, as she saw it, and as she told it to me afterwards, for I was in the boat, you know, and saw nothing all the time but a bit of ironmould on the jersey of the man in front of me.

"O, I thought that starting-gun was never going to fire," she began; "I'm sure it was late. I thought how nervous you must all be, waiting so long in the boat: several times I thought I heard it, and horrified mamma once by saying, 'Now they're off!' quite loud. At last I could see the men on the bank a long way off beginning to run, and directly came the crack of the gun, and a low sound of shouts far away. We could only see the crowd at first, winding in and out along the bank, just like a long serpent; and then the sounds grew louder and louder, and though I couldn't see the boats, I felt sure ours was gaining. Then I saw the rowers' heads above the bank, and then Exeter came round the corner, and then our boat close upon them I thought, and I said quite loud again, 'They'll bump them, I'm sure they will!' and a lady near me, not at all a young lady, was very angry, and said, 'I'm sure they'll do no such thing!' O, I could have beaten her! I could see everything plainly now, and I saw you getting nearer and nearer; I knew Charlie was putting on a spurt, and I said, 'Well done, Charlie! that's right, I know you'll bump them!' just to spite the old lady. O, how those Exeter men did shout to their boat! and they did row hard, I'm certain, for I saw the oars go dipping in and out all together like wings moving faster and faster, and they kept away from you bravely. O, what terrible shouts there were then; mad yells, they were: I trembled all over; there you were almost close to us, and all but touching Exeter. I saw Charlie tugging with all his might; I thought he would have killed himself, and Mr. Wingfield blowing that shrieking whistle

in his face all the time. O, it was fearfully exciting! I felt as if I should like to jump into the water, and I called to Charlie with all my might. I don't think anyone heard me, there was such a noise; but Charlie looked as if he did, for he rowed faster still, and then, just as you got close below us, I saw our boat run right against the rudder of Exeter, and then I knew it was all right, and I really jumped for joy. Mamma says I shouted 'Hurrah!' I daresay I did—I don't know. And now you're head of the river, don't you feel proud, Mr. Maynard?"

I had felt proud before, but I was far prouder then, as I met Florence Thornhill's bright eyes, and thought that in them I could

"discover,
She felt that I was not unworthy to love her."

CHAPTER VI.

BOATING AT COMMEMORATION: THE PROCESSION NIGHT, AND A NUNEHAM WATER-PARTY.

"SHALL you have any people up for Commem.?" said Wingfield to me, as we lay on carpet cushions, one at each end of a punt moored under the trees by Magdalen Walks. It was a hot, hazy, sultry day, and we had lazily punted ourselves up the narrow, winding stream, stopping to rest in the shade of every tree, and scarcely caring to cast an eye upon a fair passer-by on the bank, or exchange a bit of chaff with a friend on the river, till at last we lay moored in our favourite nook for the afternoon. The races were over, and we were out of training; we had done our duty to our College, we were now doing our duty to ourselves. My sweetest meerschaum, filled with my own particular mixture, supplied my only employment, while Wingfield pulled away zealously at a gigantic regalia, and we felt like a couple of Homeric gods in peaceful and perfect enjoyment of the ambrosial hour. I was too lazy to answer my comrade's question for fully a minute, and he accordingly touched me languidly on the shin with his toe, and repeated the inquiry.

"Yes," I replied, raising myself with a gentle grunt from a supine to a reclining posture, "I believe I shall."

"Your mother, and two sisters, I suppose?"

"And a cousin."

"He or she?"

"She, of course: what do you take me for?"

Five minutes went by, and then Wingfield began again.

"I've thought of asking somebody up; but, you see, I've no sisters—nothing but five she-cousins, and I hate them all. I never met a girl yet who was good for anything beyond an evening party; and even then they're safe to talk to you about some big idiot or other whose waltzing is so splendid, meaning, of course, that it's the reverse of your own. O, they're all alike, a bad lot all round! Don't you think so?"

I thought the sentiment beneath contempt, and deigned no reply.

"Well, there's one girl, certainly—that sister of Thornhill's, the youngest—who seems to have some good in her; she did take an interest in the boat; I could almost have fallen in love with her for that."

"Umph!"

"Yes," continued Wingfield reflectively; "and as she's going to be up at Commem., there's no knowing what may happen."

"Ah!" said I drily, "you'd better be careful."

"Well, yes, I think so too, old fellow; she might not suit me after all."

"More than likely," I replied, with a smile as sardonic as I could manage to make it; "suppose you were to try the eldest daughter. By the bye, Thornhill and I have agreed to join our parties and go to Nuneham on Thursday in Commem. week. You may come with us, if you'll behave yourself;

but mind, I shouldn't like to introduce to Miss Thornhill one who would cause a flutter in her breast, and then find out that she didn't suit him."

"O, all right, old fellow, I see what you're driving at; I won't interfere with you, if that's what you mean, though I think if she doesn't suit me she's still less likely to suit you. Yes, I should like to go with you to Nuneham, if it's only to see how you go about to court the young woman. There, I've finished my weed, let's move."

It is the afternoon of Saturday, the 18th of June. Oxford lies basking in the summer sun, and looks just now as lazy as a lotus-eater. Work is over, except for a few pale candidates for "Smalls," remanded for further torture by the inquisitors of the Schools. No stir in the streets, a few listless undergraduates, a nursemaid trailing a child or two, a cab jogging towards the station, and scarcely a sign of life beside. But there are those coming this afternoon who will wake the drowsy old city with a start, and keep her sleepless for nearly a week ere she settles down for the three months' doze of the Long Vacation. The platform at the railway-station is full of undergraduates, among them Thornhill and myself, awaiting the arrival of the train which is to bring our fair guests from the country. Here it comes, sweltering from the hot, dusty journey, hissing and groaning and grinding into the dingy station.

"Ah! there they are! This way! Well, how are you all? So glad to see you! You're rather late. Very tired, are you? Yes, you must be. Tickets! Luggage! Nine packages only? All right? Cab! Stop! Another bonnet-box? Not that? The round one? Yes! Quite right now, I

think! Close packing in these flies! Your dress in the door, Jessie! Now, cabby, drive on."

So I got my party off to the lodgings provided for them within a hundred yards of St. Anthony's; and Thornhill followed with his to the next door but one. A high tea at Thornhill's lodgings, and then we all strolled into the college garden together.

Just let me give you a slight idea of each member of the party. First, my mother, rather tall and stout, with a face of the most beaming good-humour, little comic wrinkles about her eyes, and a general air of what I call comfortableness. At her side my eldest sister, Minnie, tall, like my mother, and perhaps just a thought too thin, full of life and spirits, and good sense to boot, as her bright gray eyes tell you, and just the girl to make home happy, as I tell you, who ought to know. That is my younger sister, Jessie, under the old wall there, looking as if she would like to climb the ivy, or go birds'-nesting among the shrubs; you see what she is by her firm step and frank way of looking you straight in the face when she speaks; a real true-hearted English girl, believe me, with auburn hair and rosy cheeks and blue eyes, and as fond of country sports as a lady may be. Then there is my cousin, that girl with the dark-blue eyes and brown hair, very sober to all appearance, but full of quiet fun too. Mrs. Thornhill is the reverse of my mother, rather small and thin, and slightly deaf, which gives her an eager look about the eyes. She is in earnest in everything she does or says, but always kindly and pleasant to all around. Her eldest daughter, Alice, is one of those girls who delight in poetry, and look well in black velvet, stately and gracious, not easily excited, like her sister, but easily pleased.

Lastly, there is Florence Thornhill. I must not attempt to describe her, for if I once begin there'll be no stopping me; imagine her for yourself, if you please, reader. One thing I will tell you: she is bright in every sense of the word; there is brightness in her eye, brightness in her voice, brightness in her step, brightness in her glossy hair—but there, I knew how it would be, this is the one topic on which I lose my head.

"O, Mr. Maynard," said Florence, as I came to her side, having set the two senior ladies on the best of terms by shrewdly introducing the subject of babies, "it's so delightful to get back to this dear old place again; we've come prepared to enjoy ourselves to the fullest extent."

"You will have to work hard."

"Shall we? O, that's splendid; it's so delicious to feel that we're resigning ourselves altogether to pleasure just for one week. Tell me what we're going to do, will you—the programme for the week? I shall enjoy it all twice as much if I know what's coming. Mamma thinks surprise is half the pleasure, but I don't."

"Well, to-night you will have easy work, only a concert; there may be a dance after it, just impromptu, you know."

"Yes. O, I hope there will."

"In view of that possibility," said I, stopping to bow solemnly, "will you favour me with your hand for the first waltz?"

"Nothing could give me greater pleasure," she replied, mimicking my bow with mock gravity.

"I shall make a note of it," said I, taking out my pencil, "ladies' memories are short sometimes."

We stood still opposite each other while I wrote.

"Ah! you don't know me," said Florence; "you think I'm a flirt, don't you?"

Her tone was so serious all at once that I looked up in surprise.

"No," I replied rather bluntly; "quite the reverse."

She said no more, but our eyes met, and—well, that was all; but there was a look in hers that put me in high spirits for the rest of the evening.

"Florence, my dear, the grass is getting quite damp, and Charlie says it is time to dress for the concert."

"Very well, mamma, I'm coming. The first waltz, Mr. Maynard; I shall not forget."

A college concert, despite the absence of lady singers, has several advantages over ordinary amateur performances. There is the charm of the college hall, with its high oak roof, antique portraits, and associations of quaint old dons, solemn dinners, massive plate, and choice old wine, brightened up for the nonce into a lighter festivity to entertain the votaries of Euterpe, and (hear it not, shades of founders and benefactors!) perchance of Terpsichore also. And then everybody comes in the best possible humour. Many are friends of the singers, and applaud accordingly. Jones has a knot of supporters, who encore his solo as a matter of course, even though he did sing flat all through the first verse. And then there are the stewards, in the most faultless evening dress, handing you to your seat in that consummately polite and deferential way which marks the Oxford man *par excellence*. And, lastly, the cups of antique silver,

filled with ambrosial liquor, and passed down the gay rows of ladies, young and old and middle-aged, from hand to hand, ay, and from mouth to mouth, with half-revealed enjoyment. All these things combine to make a college concert always pleasant and successful. This evening's concert was no exception to the rule, and when at last the seats were cleared away, the piano and cornet set going, and we began the expected impromptu dance, everyone agreed that nothing could have been managed better. Certainly that was my opinion as I floated through that dreamy waltz with Florence Thornhill. Sunday came and went. Of course we attended duly at St. Mary's to see the vice-chancellor, doctors, proctors, "pokers," &c., in their robes of state; and in the evening, as in duty bound, promenaded the Broad Walk for the appointed hour, bowing and nodding to our friends, and scrutinising the faces and dresses of strangers, till eyes ached and necks were stiff with turning perpetually one way, and we retired, nothing loth, to supper and repose.

Next morning found us all at breakfast in Vere's handsome rooms in college, and a capital spread he gave us,—every variety of fish, flesh, and fowl that he and the cook could think of between them, not forgetting, as no rowing man could, a genuine Oxford steak. This last, strange as it may seem, charmed none but masculine appetites, but when Florence Thornhill took a small piece, with an apologetic glance at the other ladies, "just to see, you know, what training is like," my admiration for her went up many degrees. Then we managed to be very merry over the Moselle and claret cups after breakfast. First Mrs. Thornhill declined politely but with firmness,

and her eldest daughter, in spite of the remonstrances of Baxter, who practically illustrated the ease with which the liquor might be imbibed by means of a straw, did the same. Then it came to my sister Minnie: she had quite a reputation for always knowing just the correct thing to do on all occasions, and all the girls looked for Minnie's lead.

"Come, Miss Maynard," said Vere, "if Baxter is allowed to finish that cup by himself, as he will if you don't prevent it, the consequences may be fatal; consider."

Minnie hesitated and looked at my mother; my mother, who I think was, to tell the truth, nothing loth to have an example set her, returned a beaming smile, which spread all round the table, as Minnie very demurely took the straw which Baxter had selected for her, and put herself in communication with the fragrant Moselle. The spell was broken; no one hesitated now, and even the poetic Alice Thornhill yielded to the bland entreaties of Wingfield to sip, as he poetically put it, the amber stream. Florence, who sat beside me, said she had done her duty like a rowing-man in eating beef-steak, and she should now go out of training, especially as the great Henley cup was going round. So she tasted, and so did Jessie, and so did my mother.

"Now, Mrs. Thornhill," said Vere, "we can't let you off this time; this cup is made from a recipe bequeathed by our generous founder, and carefully preserved among the college archives; and they say it was over a cup of the same that our present revered Dean wooed and won his charming wife this time six years ago."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Thornhill, who took every-

thing in earnest, "then there must be something in it."

"Yes, there's a good deal in it, though it has been through Baxter's hands; it only wants one addition, and that is your straw, Mrs. Thornhill."

And so the good lady's reluctance was overcome, and she tasted the pleasant compound not once nor twice only, and the conversation became sprightly, the most sober faces looked vivacious, the merry looked merrier than ever, and everything seemed rosy and delightful.

"Ten o'clock," said Thornhill, looking at his watch. "I'm afraid we must take the ladies away, Vere; the drag will be here to take us to Blenheim at half-past ten; you and Wingfield and Baxter are engaged to come with us, remember."

"It seems almost a pity to move, though," replied Vere, "when we're all as snug as a select circle of gods and goddesses, 'as we sit beside our nectar,' &c."

"Yes; only it strikes me that the rosy hours, in the shape of stable-boys, are just yoking the steeds to our chariot, and goddesses in the present day take a little longer to dress than our old-fashioned friends Juno and Minerva; so good-morning, old fellow, we'll all meet at the gates in half-an-hour."

Golden is the hour when you roam through lovely scenes with the enchanting creature whose love you are striving not in vain to win. So I thought that Monday afternoon as Florence and I strolled over the pleasant lawns and picturesque shrubberies of Blenheim, and talked everybody knows how. And so, I believe, thought all the party, especially Wingfield. He had Alice Thornhill for a companion, and his ex-

tensive acquaintance with the poets impressed her deeply. Florence and I came upon the pair once under a mossy oak, just as Wingfield, reclining at Alice's feet, was repeating, his eyes and voice full of expressive tenderness, "Maid of Athens, ere we part," &c., to which she listened with rapt attention. We managed to slip away unobserved, and indulged our merriment at a safe distance. At last it was time to return. The drag was in waiting at the palace gates, and Florence and I reached it first.

"I wonder if I could drive four-in-hand," she said. "I've driven a pair often. Will you help me on to the box for half a minute, just to see how I feel up there?"

Of course I complied.

"O, it's splendid! I know I could manage them if I tried. I'm a first-rate whip, Charlie says."

"Take care," said I, as she took up the reins, for the leaders threw their noses up and began to move. "Wait till I get to their heads; they're very fresh."

The caution came too late; Florence could not resist giving the reins a shake, and before I could stop them the horses broke away and made for the steep incline that slopes down to the lake. I followed at my utmost speed. Florence turned and glanced at me for a moment with her face deadly pale, and then seemed to nerve herself for the horrible danger, and pulled the reins with all her strength; but four fresh horses were too much for her, and they dashed on straight for the slope.

"Keep your seat, and turn them to the right," I shouted in an agony of terror; "the right, for God's sake!"

Poor Florence hears me, and tugs manfully, but

all in vain: they are within twenty yards of the slope: nothing can stop them; in another moment they will be rolling headlong to the lake. Look! look! they must be—no, thank God, the horses see their danger, and swerve suddenly to the right; the drag sways and reels and then rights again; in the pause I am up with the horses, and Thornhill close behind me; we have them safely by the heads, and the danger is over.

"Are you hurt?" we both asked at once.

"No, not at all," replied Florence faintly. "Help me down, please."

I sprang to the wheel, and she fell senseless into my arms. The whole party came up now, all very pale, and the girls half-hysterical; Mrs. Thornhill would have fainted if her anxiety for her child had been less strong. We soon brought Florence round; her eyes opened, the colour came back to her cheek, and she declared herself quite well, and ready for the drive home.

"I think, Florence, my dear, you had better not go out again this evening," said Mrs. Thornhill, when they were safe at home.

"Not go out, mamma! Why there's the procession of boats to-night, and St. Anthony's head of the river too, and Charlie stroke of the boat. O, I wouldn't miss it for all the world!"

"Well but, dear, you won't be alone, you know; of course I shall stay with you, and we can play cribbage together, or something."

"O yes, dear mamma, you're very kind, I know, but really you must let me go. I don't mind giving up the theatricals afterwards, though, you know, I'm quite well; but I must see the procession."

"Well, run away then, and get on your finery," said Thornhill, "and you too, Alice; there's no time to lose."

Was it fancy, or did I hear Wingfield murmur, "Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome marrow," as Alice left the room?

Everybody who comes up for an Oxford Commemoration goes on Monday evening to see the grand procession of boats. Hundreds and even thousands of people come trooping to the Isis bank in the cool of that Monday evening: old *habitués* of the river, with perhaps their wives and daughters, citizens of Oxford and their families, rarely seen below Folly Bridge, strangers to whom all is new, and strangers who have seen it all before, mingled with boating-men in the many-coloured flannel uniforms of their various clubs, and undergraduate swells of the first water, all come on Monday evening to the river to see and be seen. There is an abundance of ladies, the young and fair predominating, clad in the airiest and brightest of summer costumes, filling the nine or ten college barges that lie moored along the bank, and making each look, as I heard Wingfield say to Miss Thornhill afterwards, "like a bridal bouquet filled with the choicest buds of May." There is a long deep crowd too, fringing the opposite bank, not very *distingué* in its composition, but motley enough. The Volunteer band is at work merrily; flags are flying from many a masthead, and there on the 'Varsity barge—that one which carries the big dark-blue flag—you see the long string of college colours rising one above another in the order of their place on the river. That is our St. Anthony's flag at the top, the red Maltese cross on a white ground, and

Exeter the dark crimson just below it. Now just look at the river itself, swarming with punts, dingeys, whiffs, skiffs, canoes, and craft of every size and shape, so thick in some places that you might almost cross the river by stepping from boat to boat. The Eights are manned and away down the river getting into their places, and practising to toss oars, and chaffing each other merrily. Ah! there goes the starting-gun. Look! here they come. Our boat is moored under the university barge: the Exeter Eight comes up. "Easy all!" cries the coxswain, and they float up level with us. "Up!" and all at once the eight oars rise dripping from the water, and glittering in the setting sun; our oars go up simultaneously to return the salute, and stand upright for a few seconds; both crews doff their straw-hats and cheer lustily; then "Down!" and the sixteen blades fall flapping and splashing upon the water. Exeter moves on to make way for Oriel; we salute and cheer as before, and so the procession goes on through some forty boats, with a "toss-oars" and a lusty cheer as each goes by. Just watch those men in green rowing that old-fashioned tub, the sort of thing that our fathers used to pull themselves to pieces in, and no wonder; that is the Jesus crew, all sturdy, ruddy-faced, beer-loving Welshmen: see them salute; they have a fashion of their own; there they go! At the word the whole crew rise and stand upright, each holding his oar, like a long shining lance, at his side: a long cheer with a rich Cambrian ring about it, and then "Down!" and on they go. Here come the Torpids; now look out for a spill: there they go—Balliol's over! That fat fellow Five did it on purpose, just wobbled his body at the right moment.

There is a slight cry of horror from the ladies, soon merged into laughter as the crew flounder ashore, wet and muddy, but grinning in the consciousness of having performed the sensation feat of the day. The head-boats are through Folly Bridge by this time, have turned under the Lasher (a trying business for the coxswains, I can tell you, and not accomplished without some warm language from those little tyrants of the hour), and are coming down again to their barges. Now the cheering waxes louder and lustier; the boats coming down cheer the boats going up, the Eights cheer the Torpids, the Torpids cheer the Eights, and all cheer head-boat; each man in every boat rows as he likes, and when he likes, everybody's oar gets in everybody else's way, and every boat is within an ace of upsetting, but nobody loses his temper or seems to care a rush about anything except making as much row as in him lies. Coxswains shriek and bellow to their men all in vain; small boats are swamped and their owners dragged dripping into punts; women laugh, boys chaff, and boatmen swear, and all is wild, gay, glorious confusion. Then by degrees the excitement dies away; the boats drift to their moorings at last, the gay crowds melt and vanish from the barges; the town-folk and *gamins* disappear from the opposite bank, and nothing of the late carnival remains but a stray crew of holiday citizens, and the college flags flapping lazily in the evening breeze.

As everybody knows, there are only two states of mind possible to the lover, namely, bliss in the presence of the adored, and misery in her absence; and as I had to escort my mother and sisters to the St. Anthony's theatricals, while Florence Thornhill stayed at home, it is no wonder that the performance that

Monday evening had no charm for me. Vere, I believe, acted admirably, and kept the audience in roars all through. Wingfield managed to hide his whiskers, and did a pettish little woman to the intense amusement of the ladies; and Baxter performed the part of a brown bear in the burlesque as naturally as if he had been born in the Zoological Gardens; but I was glad when the curtain fell, and I could retire to sleep and dream about Florence. I just mention these feelings of mine, that the reader may understand that I was in love in the good old romantic Romeo-and-Juliet style, which is not so fashionable now as it ought to be.

A grand morning concert, a flower-show, and an elegant lunch in Baxter's rooms, then another concert, and then the Christ Church ball.

"There is no ball like an Oxford Commemoration ball," said my sister Jessie, with an emphatic nod, as we stood together in the Lancers that evening. Jessie danced, as she did everything else, with all her heart and soul, and had a greater capacity for enjoyment than any girl I ever met.

"You're quite happy then, are you?"

"Quite,—and so I should say is Mr. Wingfield: look! I'm sure matters must be coming to a crisis between him and Alice. I've overheard some very sentimental expressions that I don't think were quotations from the poets—and, by the bye, Tom, what do you mean by being so devotedly attentive to Florence? She ought to be bored to death with you by this time—I should be."

"Do you really think she is?" I said anxiously, not observing the sly twinkle in Jessie's eye.

"Well, no; I'm afraid she cares more about you

than could be expected, considering the way you've persecuted her the last three days; but there, you're engaged to her for this waltz, I know; go along, fond lover, I can take care of myself here in the corner."

I had been resolving all the evening to speak my mind to Florence, but somehow the words would never come just at the right moment. Two or three times I had carefully planned the attack, and between the dances had composed several imaginary conversations that should lead up neatly and imperceptibly to —the subject; but they had all failed miserably. However, Jessie's words gave me a fresh spur: my mind was made up—I would do the deed forthwith. But again it was not to be; there was a change in Florence's manner all at once, not a great change, but just enough to make it impossible for me to say what I intended. I soon found out the reason.

"I've something to tell you, Mr. Maynard," said Florence, "that I daresay will amuse you very much."

"By all means tell me; what is it, pray?"

"Well, guess."

"O, I understand, it's a riddle, is it?"

"No, no such thing; it's about my sister Alice."

"Your sister Alice? and—Wingfield? Why surely they're not—"

"Yes."

"Engaged?"

"Yes, engaged—only think! I can scarcely believe it, though Alice has just told me herself. They've not told mamma yet, for she could never hear in this crowd of people; and besides, she would be sure to cry."

"And what does your brother say?"

"Charlie? O, he seems as pleased as brothers generally are, you know. Here he is; we'll ask him. Now, Charlie, how do you like the intended match?"

"Well, it's not a very good one in point of size, is it? But he's a boating-man, that's a great thing in his favour—plenty of brains and pluck about him. She might have gone higher and fared worse;" and he laughed and passed on.

Soon after that day broke in, and the ball broke up, and we departed home.

"Jessie," said I, as I wished her good-night, "I'm afraid she is tired of me."

"Not a bit," returned Jessie, "I know all about it; it has just occurred to her to-night that you may be following Mr. Wingfield's example before long: it makes her a little frightened," she added, with her most expressive nod, "but she'll get used to the idea soon, and then it will be all right, you'll see."

Next day, however, it was not all right, and Florence did not seem "to get used to the idea;" and all the mad uproar of the theatre, and all the gaiety of the masonic fête, with the dulcet harmonies of the Orpheus Glee Club, nay, even the splendour of the evening ball, with its sprightly music and ever-flowing champagne, failed to raise me from a state of lovesick dejection. Yes, it's very well to laugh: I can laugh now, but it was no joke then, for, as I said before, I was really deeply in love, and no nonsense about it. Thursday was the day for our picnic to Nuneham, and Friday would see us all scattered to our different homes, and Florence and me parted, perhaps for ever. The prospect was too dismal to be

borne. "To-morrow shall seal my fate," said I to myself, "come what come may."

Finer weather for a water-party than that Thursday brought us could not be wished, and despite the fatigues of the past week, all the party came to the river in the best possible spirits. Two large boats, of the class known in irreverent slang as "hen-coops," from the feminine freight for which they are specially designed, lay ready for us at Hall's raft, and two hampers were ready packed with good pic-nic fare—fowls, ducks, pies, pickled salmon, cucumbers, fruit, champagne, sherry, claret, soda-water, ice, lemons, and other pleasant things to be desired on a hot day in June.

"Now are you quite sure, Tom, that these boats are safe?" asked my mother, as I prepared to help her into the larger of the two.

"Safe as your own arm-chair, my dear mother."

"Well, don't run any risks, my dear; though my chaperoning duties are nearly over for the present, I may be wanted again, you know."

"Let me take care of you, Mrs. Maynard," put in Baxter: "come, I'll be cox. of this boat, Maynard, and serve out the grog, or whatever it is, from time to time; that's my line, isn't it? Now then, is everybody quite comfortable? Room enough, Mrs. Maynard? All the liquors in, Thornhill? Shove her off, Matt. Now pull away, you fellows."

And off we glided, Baxter seated in the stern, with his legs reaching far along the boat, my mother and my cousin Helen on his right, Alice Thornhill and Jessie on his left, while Wingfield and Macleane did the rowing. In the other boat were Mrs. Thornhill, Florence, and my sister Minnie, Vere, who took

the steering, Thornhill, and myself, who toiled at the ears.

Pleasant it is on the Isis river to drop gently down the stream between the smooth green banks, with the sun shining bright overhead, and to watch the gray spires of Oxford rising over the rich summer foliage, and then gradually diminishing in the hazy distance. Pleasant it is when there are light hearts and pretty faces floating along with you,

"Youth at the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;"

when many a lively jest goes round, and many a merry laugh rings out across the water, and all is bright and smiling and rosy. And we all agreed that morning that not one of the gay pleasures of the week could be compared with the serene and sunny enjoyment of our Nuneham water-party. Perhaps, as Vere remarked with complacent pity, the rowers found the enjoyment a good deal more sunny than serene; but then Baxter took care to refresh them —not forgetting himself—from time to time, and feminine voices praised their prowess, and rebuked the laziness of the two steersmen, till the toiling galley-slaves felt they were not so badly used after all. And so we glided on, past Iffley Lock and the picturesque mill, which all who see burn to sketch on the spot; past Kennington Island, with its trim little "public," famed for beer and skittles; past Sandford Lasher and the pool, where more than one good swimmer has lost his life; through the deep cold lock beside the little ivy-covered tavern, which we boating-men, in the middle of a long training row, have often passed, "and sighed and looked and sighed again," thirsting for forbidden beer; round pleasant

creeks and corners of the winding river, recalling many a bit of crafty steering, and many a hard evening's work up stream; down to Nuneham Island, all wood and weeds; sharp round the corner, and here we are lying under the prettiest of all thatched cottages and the most delicious of all green woods. Out we step on to the smooth turf, Mrs. Thornhill and my mother treading almost as lightly as their daughters, while even Baxter's heavy step becomes elastic for the moment.

"Now, ladies," said that doughty squire of dames, "here we are at last. Welcome to these silvan shades, where no end of rural fays and fairies dwell, here in cool something-or-other and mossy cell. Come, Vere, say something neat about Pan and those classical parties, will you?"

"O," returned Vere, "you're warbling your native woodnotes so beautifully wild that it would be a pity to help you out; but look here, if you want to do something classical, just take the character of Bacchus, and carry this basket of champagne up to the summer-house; perhaps the ladies will form a group of wood-nymphs to escort you."

"My character to a hair, old fellow; I'm your man; the jolly god in triumph comes."

And forthwith exit Baxter, bearing champagne, with nymphs attending.

"Now, Maynard," said Thornhill, "bustle, and let's get the dinner ready, and the rest may take a stroll till we want them."

"Very well. I see Wingfield and your sister are off already. He seems, by the wave of his hand, to be saying, 'This is the forest primeval,' &c."

"Ah, no doubt; and she's enjoying it wonder-

fully, I daresay. Now, mother, and wood-nymphs all," he went on, as we came up to the summer-house with the provisions, "we're going to spread the feast; will the lovely nymphs be kind enough to take Bacchus into the woods for a short time? he's sure to be in the way here."

"And if you want a couple of good ugly satyrs," added Vere, "perhaps you'll take Macleane and me —eh, Mac?"

"O, let me stay, Charlie, won't you?" said Florence; "you'll want one girl, I'm sure, to make it all look nice; and I can cut up a cucumber much better than either you or Mr. Maynard, you know."

"Well, yes, you may stay; I daresay we can make you useful. Now, Maynard, out with those pies, and I'll brew the claret cup; go to work at the cucumber, Florrie."

In twenty minutes or so the table was spread in the arbour by the water-side, and we were making our way into the various dainties as fast as the imperfect nature of the knives and forks, supplied from the cottages, would allow. No one declined the fragrant bowl of Moselle, or hesitated a moment over the claret cup this time, and even sherry-cobbler, that persuasive nectar, found no small favour among nymphs as well as satyrs. Of course everything was pronounced delicious, and everybody was as merry as it was in his or her nature to be. My mother's face beamed with smiles on all around; Mrs. Thornhill made believe to be taking in all Vere's jokes with great apparent enjoyment; and even Wingfield and Alice gave up for the time the romantic air which ought, as they clearly considered, to wrap an affianced pair.

"Well," said Baxter, after trying in vain to persuade the ladies to partake once more of the cherry-tart and claret cup, over which he especially presided, "if I can't persuade a lady to take any more, I'm certain nobody else can, so, Thornhill, I move that we seek the sequestered groves, and try and pick up sermons in stones, and that sort of thing, eh? May I give you an arm, Mrs. Thornhill? We sober, middle-aged people, Mrs. Maynard, can walk quietly behind, and let wayward youth wander where it likes."

Wayward youth was not slow to take the hint, and we were soon deep in the cool greenwood. I cannot remember how it came about, but somehow or other, quite by accident it seemed, Florence and I got parted from the rest. It was really not our doing; we happened to be talking together, and walking, perhaps, a little slower than the rest, and you know how easy it is to lose yourself in a wood. I suppose we took a wrong turning, or perhaps the others left us on purpose; at any rate, there we were all at once walking side by side alone. All at once, too, our powers of conversation, which had been lively enough before, seemed to fail, and my heart began to beat quick, as I bethought me that now or never was the time to make the plunge for good or ill. Stealing a side-glance at Florence, I saw she looked embarrassed, and as if her heart were beating too. What was she thinking about? She must guess what was coming. Was she considering how to make her "no" as gentle as possible? Or was she—well, the sooner I find out the better. Yes, but how to begin? how to start a subject near enough to *the* subject, and not too near? I was relieved; Florence broke silence first.

"I never thanked you properly," she said, "for saving my life that day at Blenheim; I did not mean to be ungrateful; I have thought of it often."

"Ungrateful," replied I, feeling a singular dryness in the throat that nearly choked me; "I'm sure I did nothing to deserve gratitude."

"O, yes! if you had not stopped the horses just when you did I should have been dashed against the trees and—killed," she added, with a slight shudder. "We may not meet again, after to-morrow; but I shall never forget that I owe my life to you."

She looked up as she spoke, our eyes met, and—really I would rather not go on, only all young-lady readers would, I know, be utterly disgusted. Young ladies always want to know how this sort of thing is done, and find it impossible to ascertain from those who have actually done it, so, with considerable sacrifice of personal feeling, I shall just tell them right out how I did it. Where did I leave off? Our eyes met, and held a short, very short telegraphic conversation, which meant something like this: I—"Do you?" She—"Do you?" I—"Will you?" She—"Will you?" Both—"Yes, we were made for each other!" Then we spoke with the tongue, though speech seemed quite unnecessary.

"Florence," said I, "I love you dearly; will you be my wife?"

There was a murmuring reply, like a ripple of water on the sand, and then a period, I don't know how long, of delirious joy, which the poverty of the language will not allow me to describe; all I knew or felt was, that Florence Thornhill was mine, mine against the world, mine till the crack of doom. There now, my dear young lady, are you satisfied?

No, of course not; you want to know all about the wedding, and the number of bridesmaids, and how they were dressed, and whether Florence cried, and whether we sent cards. Well, all I can say is, that if you will give us a call some day—our house is the prettiest cottage in Surbiton—Florence will be delighted to talk it all over with you, as she has talked it over a hundred times already with other young ladies.

And now, readers all, farewell. My rowing days are over; they have been—I say it deliberately, in spite of Florence's frown—the happiest days of my life, and the memory of them will be always dear. There stands at my knee, jogging my arm as I write, a sturdy, straight-backed little fellow, whom I hope to see, somewhere about the year 1885, handling a good oar in the dark-blue eight at Putney, and stirring in my heart memories still fresh and green of my boating life at Oxford.

WATER-DERBIES.

BY "WAT BRADWOOD."

"AB ORIGINE."

We are all mad, argues Damasippus, each in his own way—the maniac by the judgment of the world, the wise man in the estimation of the fool; and in some such light may each generation view the rages and fashions of its ancestors and successors. Sportsmen of the moor or the hunting-field would not now tolerate the "walking after hounds" from sunrise, the slow evolutions of a lumbering Spanish pointer that delighted our ancestral squires; and they, in turn, would stand aghast at the prodigality of sport condensed or squandered in an hour by us, when the fox is raced down in forty minutes between midday and afternoon tea, or the cover that has been nursed and watched for months is sacked in one short hour to gratify the pride of a grand battue.

Nor could they who thought no shame in daily drunkenness and the pride of three-bottle prestige, led on by early daylight dinner and fostered by supper at unnatural hours, who cried content with the present continental standard of ablution, relieved in aristocratic instances by the Saturday's warm bath, appreciate the early supper, so construed dinner now-a-days, moderate potations, early retirement, and

daily "tub" that characterises the life of nine-tenths of our "upper ten."

Change of régime of body must perforce include change of habits and exercise, and example once set all follow suit readily to the new doctrine. Hence, now that the soberer and more wholesome line of life of the new generation has given new impulse to the physique and lengthened the rates of life-assurance, what wonder that we seek to test in rivalry physical developments no longer crippled by appetite or fashion; that athletic sports, in all sorts and shapes, have taken such hold upon the mind of our British youth? The furor did not develop itself in one year, or even in a decade. More than half a century was required to develop the time-honoured Hambledon and Chislehurst clubs into the all-legislative M. C. C. It was years before grown "men" of Universities and public clubs condescended to practise in after life the sports of foot-racing, foot-ball, &c., that they had learnt and enjoyed at school, but for so long tabooed as childish when they changed their scene of action; and last in mention, yet greatest in existence and oldest in date, has been the ever-increasing furor for aquatics, rowing and sculling, *pur et simple*, and not the mongrel unhealthiness of "canoeing." One race, *par excellence*, from the purity of its aim and excellence of its end, the *prestige* of its performers, the publicity of its date and of its locality, has gained the title of the "Water-Derby."

Ten years agone scarcely a paragraph in the daily papers heralded the advent to Putney of the Oxford and Cambridge crews; their week of sojourn was passed in silence; and a quarter-column sketch, at

a "penny a line," told sufficient for the hour of the struggle when past. And now the "Thunderer" itself thinks no scorn to devote two columns of description and a "leader" to boot on the day of battle; and the cheap press and its satellites have fattened for days past upon the jottings and pickings of Putney practice. Barnes Terrace and Hammersmith Bridge rival the "Row" and the "drive" in fashion for our afternoon lounger as the race draws near; and the Saturday half-holiday brings down a larger throng of spectators for the practice of dark and light blue than came to see the race itself in the great days of Chitty and Meade King.

We hear so much of late that the Cam is a "mere ditch," upon which no decent boat can row and train, that few will credit the fact that, for some fortuitous reason, rowing was a popular pastime at Cambridge even earlier than at Oxford; but this is going back to the "dark ages:" in those times as now the Cam was easy of access over open and common ground; but the Isis, bounded by Christchurch meadows, did not lie in a thoroughfare, and boat-builders had no license to set up shop, as now, alongside of the walks. But Oxford soon caught the infection, and within half a generation the first University race took place upon the Thames from Hambledon to Henley. There Staniforth for Oxford, still a hale and hearty squire on the shores of Windermere, backed up by Garnier and Wordsworth of the future episcopate, won the toss for sides, no small gain, and the race with ease, while Snow, the Cambridge stroke, had behind him the present Bishop of Lichfield (Selwyn), so early were the doctrines of "muscular Christianity" inaugurated. "Light" and "dark" blue were not

then established; Oxford wore blue rosettes generally—Cambridge took pink. In those days it was often the custom for the "head" College Eight of each river, Cam and Isis, to meet by mutual consent at the end of summer term as representatives of their Universities. This accounts for the non-continuance of the match by Cambridge. No records of these early days are preserved; but we hear that Queen's College headed Oxford, Christchurch having "taken off" from the head, in consequence of the opposition of their dean, in 1837, and as the record saith, "went as usual" to row the head boat of Cambridge, St. John's, on the Henley reach, and "beat them easily." The recurrence of these matches, and the rivalry and anxiety of other clubs to compete with the Universities, caused the local gentry of Henley to give the far-famed "Grand Challenge Cup," open to the world, in 1839, and this, with subsequent additional prizes, formed Henley Regatta. However, in 1836 Oxford and Cambridge had met again; this time from Westminster to Putney was the course, five and a half miles, and Cambridge won with ease.

A little later, we fancy in 1838, Cambridge, unable to get a race with Oxford, challenged the world, and made a match with the then great "Leander" Club. The rowing world thought that Cantab enthusiasm had overshot the mark; but Cambridge won gallantly—each had "professional" coxswains. In 1839 Cambridge again made an example of Oxford from Westminster up; in 1840 they beat them again, but Oxford were close up, thirty feet only astern, and not disgraced; but in 1841 they fell off, and lost by half a minute. In 1842 Oxford had a revival; some scientific men, whose names are still

a household word—Sir R. Menzies, and A. Shadwell, and G. Hughes, brother of the Lambeth M.P., turned the tide and won the first race for Oxford on London water. In 1843 there was no race, but the O. U. B. C. went to Henley, and the episode of the "seven oars" came off. The "Cambridge Subscription Rooms" held the Cup; in their crew were all the *élite* of Cambridge oarsmen of 1841 and 1842, some left, some still resident at Cambridge. Oxford won the trial heats; but in waiting for the start for the final heat, the Oxonian stroke, R. Menzies, who had been for some days in a weak state of health, fainted in No. 5's arms. His recovery was impossible, and Cambridge with justice refused Oxford the use of any outside member of their club who might be present, but granted an hour's delay for the stroke's convalescence. Meantime Oxford, infuriated at the idea of losing victory when apparently within their grasp, determined to start with seven oars, and to the post they went, putting 7 at stroke; bow at 7, and bow oar vacant. Cambridge rowed to the Stewards' Stand and protested against the incorrect number of oars, but the executive bade them surrender the Cup or row. At the start they offered to reverse their refusal and allow Oxford anyone they liked from the bank; but the latter in turn refused, and finally won a good race by a clear length amidst an uproar unparalleled. But this feat, though a great one, cannot rank as a "University match." Of this "glorious seven" all but the late Colonel Brewster of the Inns of Court Volunteers are still alive, and for posterity the names of the rest were, F. Menzies (brother of the stroke who broke down), E. Royds, G. Boarne, J. C. Cox, R. Lowndes, G.

Hughes; steered by A. Shadwell. This crew with a new bow, Stapylton, again beat the Cambridge crew, and also the Leander Club, a few days later, for the Gold Cup at the Thames Regatta. In 1844 no match again; but at the Thames Regatta the O. U. B. C. again beat Leander, and this time also a *bonâ fide* C. U. B. C. crew, by a long distance. In 1845 Cambridge came forward and beat Oxford, both at London in a match and for the Grand Cup at Henley. This time the course, in consequence of the increase of steamer traffic, was from Putney to Mortlake. In 1846 Cambridge again won; this time a hard race. In 1847 there was no match, but Oxford beat Cambridge at Henley easily. In 1849 there were two races, of which each won one, Oxford the later one, by a foul, but were plainly, by all accounts, the best crew. In 1848, 1850, and 1851 there were no matches, but the results of the Grand Challenge Cup, won each of these years at Henley by Oxford, and on the latter occasion to the discomfiture of a Cambridge University crew, seems to point to their superiority. In 1852 the celebrated Chitty's crew beat Cambridge in a match, and Meade King's crew did the same with equal ease in 1854. In 1853 there had been no race, but both clubs met at Henley, and Oxford won; they won, however, by six inches only, and had the best station of the two, so that Cambridge, even if defeated, bore no disgrace. In 1855, the "long frost" stopped an impending match, but at Henley Cambridge beat Oxford easily. They did the same in a London match in 1856, but in 1857 Oxford won again, with a celebrated crew.

In 1858 Cambridge won at London, but the

Oxford stroke damaged his rowlock at the start, so that he could hardly use it. However, Cambridge won the Cup at Henley that summer, unopposed by Oxford. In 1859 Cambridge sank in the London match, but were fairly beaten at the time. In 1860, Cambridge won a hard race, and since then Oxonian victory has been uniform; but the hard-fought races of 1865 and 1866, in each of which Cambridge held the lead for three miles, yet lost the race in the fourth mile, increased rather than diminished the interest attached to the affair. Nearer and nearer have Cambridge come each year to victory; in 1864 they led for a few hundred yards, in 1865 for three miles, in 1866 for three miles and a half, and on April 13th, 1867, they rowed the most wondrous neck-and-neck race on record, defeated only at the last by three-quarters of a length.

This brings us to the match on April 4th of the present year of grace; and whatever may have been the shortcomings in style and pace of the University eights of this year, the seasonable hour and fair weather of the day drew a larger concourse than had ever before congregated to witness the closest of races between the most *élite* of crews. The furor for the race and its result grows greater each year. From the Ship at Mortlake to the Aqueduct at Putney the banks from ten to thirty yards deep, according to the accommodation, are lined with a close-packed seething mass of the British populace. Hammersmith Bridge is impassable and almost invisible, every available inch of standing or hanging room, from the pavement to the chains, close covered with expectant sight-seers, till the roadway sinks under the pressure eighteen inches below its orthodox level,

and makes us fear a repetition, on a colossal scale, of the great Yarmouth catastrophe of twenty-five years ago.

House-tops, balconies, steamers, pleasure-boats, contribute in smaller proportion their quota to the general gathering, till half a million would fall far short of the concourse; and even Epsom Downs on the Derby-day would look foolish for dirt alongside of Father Thames on the day of days.

And for days and weeks past, not only with the crews in training, but with the general British public, the note of preparation had been sounding, steamers chartered, railway fares tripled, windows and balconies bespoken; ties, bonnets, rosettes, and parasols, of the rival hues, sold by the hundredweight. No Court-mourning would inflict one half such injury to trade as the withdrawal of the race and its concomitant sources of plunder and profit. Betting, of course, there was in plenty; not that one in a thousand of those who betted upon the race knew anything about rowing, or could have distinguished one crew from the other by its style, or anything except the discrimination of uniform; but the result was a convenience for gambling, and the "odds" were quoted accordingly in the return from Tattersall's as systematically as the Derby and Two Thousand prices of the day.

> "Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam
> Multa tulit fecitque puer, sudavit, et alsit,
> Abstinuit."

How few of those who recently gazed, in their holiday outing, at the eights as they flashed by them on April 4th, can appreciate the patient endurance, toil, trouble, self-denial, that those eighteen "ceruleans" have undergone before they came fit to the

post to do justice and honour to themselves and their University. Hardly has the October Term been inaugurated, and the repose of Long Vacation roused once more into life, than the President of the U.B.C. has to set to work to compile the "trial eights." Every man in the University of any reasonable merit or promise has a chance and trial for that; and after a few weeks two crews are finally selected, balanced as equally as can be, and set at the end of term to test their individual merits in a race on the broad reaches of Ely, or the open waters of Nuneham.

From the commencement of the ensuing Lent Term the University eight is set going; the trial eights have pretty well sifted the merits of aspirants, and before long the crew has settled into something like regular shape and practice. Three or four weeks bring them to Lent, and with it the commencement of training. Out of bed by 6.30 or 7 o'clock A.M. every morning, and a mile or two of walking before a breakfast of regulation steaks and chops. Light lunch about 1.30, and then the day's grind; whether a short-course day, of twice to Iffley and back again on the Isis, and down to Baitsbite on the Cam, or a long-course to Abingdon Lasher, and its equivalent of Clayhithe. Through rain, snow, and wind, through fair and foul alike, no rest, no reprieve. If floods have not put the water meadows along the banks of Isis completely under its flow, there may be seen some five or six times a fortnight, and oftener, a group of horsemen waiting at the first gate below Sandford, while the "pets" peel to their jerseys in the teeth of a gale, and set off for the long row of $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles, which, upon a narrow river and slacker tide,

fully equals the $4\frac{1}{3}$ miles from Putney to Mortlake. For the first mile or two the high bank to the westward shelters the boat from the wind, which blowing across can raise but little surf, but lower down, so soon as the circuitous navigation of Nuneham Island has been completed, symptoms of "open sea" begin to be painfully apparent. "Hold your oars tight, all!" squeaks the coxswain as they round the corner of the rustic bridge, and two or three long rollers lap up Bow's back, nearly float Five off his seat, and land themselves in the shivering steerer's lap. "Get well forward!" "Keep it long!" as the men can hardly bend forward against the blast, and here and there the oars come whack against a great breaker, extracting a stifled curse from the oarsmen, a snarl from the coxswain, and a vicious scolding from the "coach" on the bank. Three minutes of this purgatory and then the Railway Bridge gives a temporary respite from the gale, which only meets them worse than ever in the long bend below, and makes her jaded crew groan over the cruel mockery of "Take her in, all!" as they reach the creek corner above the Lasher, and are called upon for the customary final spurt. The sedgey waters of Cam can never produce such miniature sea as this; but a good bleak row from Ely to Clayhithe, through fourteen miles of dreary fens, under March east wind, and a run of a mile or two at the end of a hard day in pelting rain or driving snow, will bear a good comparison with the roughest pleasures of the Oxford course.

Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown, and of all others the president's is least of all a bed of roses. He has the whole onus of the selection and training of the crew, though when the time comes when he

can no longer coach his recruits, but must himself take his place in the boat, he may, if he is fortunate, secure some friend to undertake the tuition from the bank during training. Apart from the practice, the "condition" and health of the crew form a most important item in his cares. In order to keep so many men in strict obedience and discipline, it is necessary to have fixed rules of régime and diet, and no appearance of caprice; and yet at the same time the work and treatment that suit the physique of one man will hardly suit all, and continued variation, adjustment, and grace have to be apportioned by the captain to meet emergencies. Then, again, some members of the crew, especially if well scolded for a fault, are invariably finding out something wrong and uncomfortable with their oars, stretchers, rowlocks, &c.; and much scientific knowledge of work and mechanics is needed to discover whether the fault really lies with the oarsman or with his tool. Then, if the crew goes at all amiss, or does not please the fancy of critics of other colleges, the Captain is inundated with suggestions, anonymous letters, and hints that he has not selected the best men available for use, or is badgered to change the Stroke, or to transpose 7 and 6, &c. And well-meaning busybodies from town and country write wholesale to him offering their experiences and suggestions. One recommends the crew to train on eggs and sherry; another, whose consumptive wife has lately been restored to health and strength upon asses' milk, suggests in gratitude that the O.U.B.C. or C.U.B.C. should follow suit to the remedy. Another wants to see oars of some new-fangled shape of his own tried; another asserts that if the President will only build a boat about 82 feet 7 inches in length

he will win in a canter, and go so fast that he will lose his own breath. And the touts of trade are equally pestilent: every dabbler in collodion and nitrate of silver petitions to be allowed to photograph the crews, and is aggrieved if refused, for to accommodate all would be to keep the men standing in open air six hours a day. One patentee solicits the adoption of his novel corn-flour, "especially suitable for dyspeptics and invalids;" another forces his way at breakfast-time with a novel garment, combining shirt, trousers, socks, and pocket-handkerchief all in one piece, "admirably adapted for walking, riding, racing, hunting," &c., and pleads that the race is a moral for the men if they will only row clothed in this nondescript. If the tide compels an early start some hundred letters come in from patres and matres familiarum, whose digestions would be ruined by such unearthly hours, or whose daughters would be at that time engaged in a music-lesson, pointing out the propriety of changing the hour. No sooner is the umpire's steamer chartered —the private property of the two clubs—and the reserved rendezvous for the one especial day in the year of all old champions of former 'Varsity races, than every puny outside reporter who thinks that nothing can be lost for the asking, pesters the President for a ticket, pleading the "liberty of the press" as a reason for locomotion at the expense of the crews instead of his own, and ignoring the fact that his presence will exclude from that precious gathering some old thranite who has toiled in auld lang syne for the honour of his blue, and that the race could be reviewed and the report compiled just as easily from other free steamers if the "liner" be but content to pay for his passage thereon.

And during their sojourn at Putney, whilst in the last week or two of training, the crews—the lions of London *pro tem.*—are mobbed and hustled wherever they go. They have to fight their way through an admiring crowd of counter-skippers and costermongers before they can launch their boat for a row, or return from it, pumped and wearied, to their dressing-rooms. Their coach from the bank has all his work to do to pick his way through a mass of galloping snobs, who mob him wherever he places himself, as if the only correct view of the crew were to be obtained between him and the river; while, unless his lungs are stentorian, he has little chance of being audible above the clatter of the hoofs of equestrian cockneys.

And at last the ordeal is over, the finishing touch has been added, and myriads, and tens of myriads, come out into the wilderness for to see two crews of whose merits they know nothing except by hearsay —a multitude, not one of whom in a hundred has personal interest in the honour of either University, except where the sordid gain of bets has lent its bias; and few of whom could tell the difference between one eight and the other, did they come out in plain white instead of in uniform. Yet the rabble come and see, and go, because it is the thing to do—because they like to say that they have seen the race, and have not yet arrived at the possession of sufficient confidence in themselves and their friends to satisfy their reputation and save exertion by the simple mendacity of saying that they have been there, yet stopping peacefully at home meanwhile.

It is 11.30 before the crews make a move to their boat-houses, and launch their ships. A threepenny-

bit has at last changed the luck of six successive years, and has won the choice of sides for Cambridge; a good omen for the Light Blue to start with. Then they get afloat and paddle to stations, Oxford first, Cambridge following in decidedly slovenly style, very inferior to some of the even rowing which they have exhibited during the last week. A good deal of mist hangs over the river, though the sun is fighting his way through overhead; so dense has the fog been in early morning at London that hosts who have come to the race have breakfasted by candlelight. As it is even now, out in open country, the general landmarks are obscured, and the coxswain's office is more arduous than ever, for in the centre of a wide stream, the shores, even if visible in a mist, are a poor criterion of correct direction, and in front, at the end of the reaches, they are quite invisible. There is an even start, but by no means a rapid one, such as is often seen in a University race. The Oxford stroke, unused to starting from a stationary position, with the tide flowing past him, adding to the dead pull a resistance equivalent to that which would be if the boat was running sternwards three miles an hour, at the signal for the start, misses the first stroke almost entirely, and for the next two or three strokes the boat "lollops" uncomfortably. Cambridge set off after the first three or four strokes to a racing-stroke of 41 a minute, not a bit too fast for a really first-class crew, but infinitely beyond their power to maintain for more than a few minutes, and so it is proved; though they secure a lead of half a length by the lower willows of Craven, that is the extent of their tether, and a little beyond the Cottage, Oxford, working up to a good 39, have overhauled them, and the

next quarter mile is rowed by each neck and neck. Even thus early the pace has begun to tell upon Cambridge, and the time, especially on the stroke side, is none of the best. The styles of progress of the two boats themselves are palpably distinct; Cambridge take a shorter time to come forward through the air than to row through the water; they go much further backward than Oxford, and are very slow in getting the hands off the chest; their boat is drawn through the water at each stroke, but has hardly any perceptible "lift." Oxford, on the other hand, besides rowing in good time, swing just the reverse of Cambridge, a long time in getting forward and very fast through the water, driving the oars through with a hit like sledge-hammers, while the boat jumps out of the water several inches at each stroke. Cambridge have shot their bolt by the "Crab Tree," and rapidly Oxford pass them and take a lead. By the Soap-works they are clear, and taking the shore arch at Hammersmith Bridge, go still further away round the bend in their favour off Chiswick. As they enter Corney Reach, Cambridge go all to pieces, and lose the last vestige of form and time, while Oxford also become a little wild on the stroke side, for no excusable reason, for they are not distressed, and have all their own way. The steamers rather overrun Cambridge in Corney Reach, and though not heading them, draw away the water from them, and to some extent check their speed and spoil any chance that might be left; but that is remote indeed, to judge by the men in the bows of the eight, each rowing his own stroke and swing, such as it is, with sublime indifference to the time set by Stroke. The continued plucky spurts of the latter, and the rowing of the

President, No. 7, who keeps his shape and form manfully, even under the pressure of pace and distress, and does more work than any other two put together, gain great κύδος from critics near enough to see and judge the merits of the rowing; but beyond the performances of these two, there is nothing to be observed to the credit of the bulk of the Cambridge crew, except their unflinching pluck and perseverance. Thus they shoot Barnes Bridge, Oxford swinging and hitting the water, Cambridge scrambling and tugging at it. Four clear lengths separate them, and a terrific "crab," caught by No. 4 of Cambridge off the marshes (the first *bonâ fide* crab recorded since the introduction of outriggers in a University race, though oars have twice been knocked out of the hand at the start by steamers—in 1858 and 1864—and there were sundry minor shell-fish in the Oxford boat of 1860), puts the *coup de grâce* to Light-Blue discomfiture, and lands Oxford winners in 20 min. 56 sec.

The time of the race is the fastest recorded of these races upon flood-tide; though practice is continually much faster, when the crews can choose their own time, on a good stream clear of wind, such as was the day of this race. The misconduct of steamers, delaying the start till the tide had run "slack," and even turned, has marred the time of some of the strongest and fastest crews on record, and spoilt the average of pace over the course. Till, however, some future race shall eclipse this last, the Oxonians have a feather in their caps. The fastest race on record is that of '63, rowed from Barker's Rails upon the ebb, a distance of little more than 5 miles, which occupied 23 min. 6 sec., and the time over the last $4\frac{1}{3}$ miles,

the legitimate course, 20 min. 5 sec. On that occasion wind and stream were both in favour of Oxford, easy winners by some 200 yards, and had a good crew fairly contested them, the pace might have been much greater. The quickest practice time was made by the Oxonians of 1857, upon a terrific spring-tide, in 19 min. 50 sec.; and 20 min. 10 sec., 20 min. 20 sec., and 20 min. 30 sec., were accomplished variously by the Oxonians in '63 and '66 at only half a racing stroke, upon good tides and smooth water. Till this year the fastest race on the flood, and second fastest altogether, was made by the Cambridge eight of 1846, the first year of outriggers, in boats far heavier and slower than those of the present day. After all, so much depends upon the wind and tide, which vary so much from day to day, and hour to hour, that time is but a random test of merit on Putney water, whatever it may be on the more evenly-regulated course of Henley, and even there a breeze may spring up or fall in an hour, and alter the pace of a race by half a minute.

The obvious impression from viewing the late race is that Cambridge, who had made a great stride in improvement during the three past years, have suddenly relapsed and failed in the simplest desiderata for a crew of boys or juniors,—time and swing. General style may deteriorate, and be hard to regain in a hurry, but any style, such as it is, should, after ten weeks' practice, be uniform among the crew who practise it. Strange to say, Cambridge rowed very nicely together when they first came to Putney a fortnight before the race, while Oxford were decidedly rough; the latter, however, improved, and though never first-class, were a good average crew,

while Cambridge, during the last few days, fell all to pieces, without being in the least over-trained. The sluggish recovery of the hands from the chest ruined them when they came to try a racing stroke. In fact they could not row (though they might snatch) a racing stroke, and could not, as did Oxford last year, win at a mere half-speed stroke.

The general style of Oxford has not deteriorated; though many outsiders fancied that Oxford rowed a short stroke, it was more that the time occupied by them in slashing the oar through the water was short, than the reach itself; this deceived inexperienced eyes, especially when compared to the slow "draw" through of Cambridge, which often appeared for similar reasons a longer stroke than it really was. But the pace of Oxford this year was hardly so good as formerly, though their trials with the watermen were not so bad as made out, for the professionals always poached a stroke or two before the word was given, and Oxford were besides avowedly slow in getting away; Oxford always made up their lost start before 100 or 200 yards had been rowed, and the watermen stopped as soon as collared. Yet there is no doubt that though the weight of the Oxonians was up to the average (12 stone), and the general way of doing the work orthodox, yet two or three of the men did hardly so much work for their weight as they should, and so fell short in pace of harder working yet lighter weighted crews of former years. So long as the general style of rowing is kept up to the average, the pace can be improved by introduction of stronger men another year, or the advancement in strength of those as they fill out with age.

Cambridge had this year a finer average set of

men than Oxford, but threw away their chances by employing an incompetent "coach," who at best had steered, but had never rowed in his life. However, they may have thought that he possessed more than ordinary experience from the fact that his services had in former years not only been confined to Cambridge, his own University, but had been freely applied, though unsuccessfully, to Oxford, when for the time being the authorities of the Cambridge boat repudiated the counsels of their former mentor. Be it as it may, his experience availed nothing to teach the modern style of light-boat rowing, and the miserable failure of Cambridge this year, the utter waste of one of the finest set of men that they ever sent into training, may be attributed to his management.

For one thing, however, all praise is due and freely accorded to Cambridge, for that, after a seventh successive defeat, they came forward again, as a matter of course, to try their fortune. Long may such spirit exist in both Universities! Rightly said the Cantab President at the dinner of the crews after the race, that to abandon the race would be to relinquish and extinguish the main incentive to boating on the Cam, to smother rivalry, and lower the standard of rowing 50 per cent. There has been fault as well as misfortune in the turns of Cambridge affairs, and wisdom will surely though slowly come by experience. The temporary relapse of this year from the gradually improved standard of the former three has been due to error in the selection of a coach, and that error can be avoided for the future. Sympathy is universal for Cambridge; Oxonians themselves would gladly see them win, if only Oxford were up to the mark, and Cambridge beyond it. We cannot afford

to lose what has become almost a national institution, an annual holiday, the leading feature in a leading sport, and that one in which the sole prize is one of honour,—honour dearer, in the heat of the struggle, to any of the competitors than health, strength, or even life itself.

ROWING AT THE UNIVERSITIES.*

NONE of our English out-of-door sports deserves higher commendation than is merited by rowing. The education of eye and ear, the quick decision of the mind, the strengthening of the nerves, and that combination of good qualities which we know under the name of "pluck," are better attained by the practice of rowing than by any other sport. In rowing, moreover, the more unselfish impulses of a man's character are called forth, and something higher than even *esprit de corps* is appealed to. On the cricket-ground his strongest desire is to head the score of his side, or to take the greatest number of wickets, and generally to sustain his own reputation even at the expense of his comrades. In the hunting-field the chief pleasure of all is outstripping competition from motives of a purely personal kind. Again, in those contests now known as "athletics," the medal or the silver cup is too generally the sole object of ambition. But in rowing the case is mostly different. There is, it is true, a set of men who go about from one small country regatta to another, in the practice of what is commonly called "pot-hunting," and who prevent the spread of good rowing by discouraging the hopes of the local oarsmen; but rowing as it is carried on by the great London clubs, and especially at the Universities, is a pastime of a far higher nature.

* From the *Pall-Mall Gazette* of June 1, 1868.

When the freshman begins his undergraduate career at Oxford or Cambridge, he has soon to choose his set of friends and the kind of life he means to lead. Supposing his tastes have as yet no distinct bias, and that he has a strong constitution and fair muscular development, it is not improbable that he may become a "boating man." At Cambridge, if the freshman belong to a small college, he will probably be at least tried for rowing whatever he may be like, since a small college can hardly keep its boats high on the river unless all its available members assist. But if he be at Trinity and has not come there from Eton or Westminster, his chance of rowing is very uncertain. The First Trinity club, the largest in the University, has a great many members, and the captains experience the greatest difficulty in finding out the capabilities of the different men. The way in which this end is aimed at is as different from the system used at Oxford as the results it produces certainly are. The newly-elected freshmen are taken down to the river-side, probably on a cold day in the October term, and then tumbled into eight-oared "tubs" without in most cases the smallest preliminary teaching. The consequence is that these raw crews, after being "slanged" unmercifully by "coaches" and by coxswains, return to the boathouse with no more knowledge of rowing than a keen impression of the misery it has caused them. Many of them are disgusted, and seek a more pleasant mode of passing the afternoon, while those who persevere acquire faults of style which are never afterwards eradicated. This state of things existed at any rate till very recently; lately, we believe, considerable improvement has been made. A better example has

been set by the smaller colleges, notably by Trinity Hall and Christ's, so that now the freshmen are frequently prepared in "tub pairs" before being put into the eight-oar. At Oxford a different system of management has for a long time been pursued. There are fewer rowing men even in proportion to the size of the University than at Cambridge. We believe no college has more than three boats on the river, while at Cambridge First Trinity has six, Trinity Hall till lately had four, and one or two of the other colleges have three. The result is that at Oxford one never sees such bad rowing as at Cambridge, and the men who do row take a more serious view of the whole affair. The man who proves a "corker"—that is, in rowing slang, utterly unlikely ever to be any good in a boat—is not usually persevered with, while the attention and care of the captains are concentrated on those who show signs of promise. A great deal of preliminary "coaching" is done in pairs and especially in fours, and the "coaches" are usually men who know something about rowing. At Cambridge the opposite is but too often the case. In fact, a really good knowledge of the art of rowing can scarcely be said to exist at all among the oarsmen of the Cam. There is no opposition between theory and practice in this matter, any more than there is in metaphysics or moral philosophy, and we believe that the practical deterioration and ill success of Cambridge rowing may be traced to a want of acquaintance with its theory. The existence of a disease is commonly considered proved by the appearance of certain symptoms, and we think a symptom may be noticed in point. At Oxford it is by no means an impossible matter to find

a man good enough to row stroke of his college crew; we hear now and then complaints that first-rate strokes are rarely met with, but as a rule Oxford is well off in this respect. At Cambridge, on the contrary, the stroke is almost an extinct animal. Looking at the boats in the recent May races we feel certain that only two boats in the whole University had a man rowing at the most important place in the boat who knew anything about his business. The reason of this is that the system of Oxford is right, and the system of Cambridge is wrong. At Oxford a sound knowledge of the true principles and practice of rowing has been handed down from former oars to the men of the present time, and a correct theory produces a successful practice. At Cambridge the good of the University has in deed, if not in word, been subordinated to the good of the individual colleges; carelessness in system, a habit of doing certain things without knowing why, and a preference of the college to the University, have gradually reduced Cambridge rowing to its present unsatisfactory state. We have no desire to exalt one University at the expense of the other, but such facts as the inter-university races of the last eight years, and the college eights which ended the other day at Oxford and Cambridge respectively, compel us to seek reasons which may account for their existence. It is needless to say anything about the inter-university contests; everyone who knew anything about rowing, and who saw the two crews near Barnes Bridge this year, could not fail to draw an identical inference. We particularly wish to speak of the recent college eights. Formerly Henley Regatta used to be the corollary of the May races at Oxford and at Cambridge. Worthy representatives

from both decided the respective excellence of each other's college crews. But for some years back Cambridge has met with the same fortune as at Putney, and last summer she was quite unrepresented. There are, we think, two reasons for this—first, that the mistake of neglecting the University for the several colleges has done immeasurable harm; and secondly, that while Oxford has avoided this mistake, she has the advantage of a sensible style of rowing in her favour, while Cambridge persistently sticks to a style utterly faulty. Let us endeavour to explain this with as little technicality as may be. Among the college boats in the first division at Cambridge this year the strongest were, perhaps, First Trinity, Trinity Hall, and notably Emmanuel; the weakest in the division was the Lady Margaret crew. But notwithstanding this, Lady Margaret went up one place and pressed First Trinity very hotly. There must of course be some special reason to account for eight weak men proving superior to eight strong ones. That reason is to be found in the word *style*. Every day of practice on the Cam you hear the "coaches" of the different racing-boats giving their crews certain directions, some absurd, and nearly all, from some accidental reason, useless. The chief of these is "to keep it long," and if you object to the results of this teaching you are told that "length" is the great requisite of good rowing, and that "Oxford, sir, always beat us because they are longer than we are." Now, this is true and yet untrue. At Cambridge "length" is acquired by making the men "finish the stroke," that is, by making them "swing well back" beyond the perpendicular. Of course the oar remains longer in the water, but we maintain that the extra time it

is kept there by the backward motion of the body is time lost. The "swinging back" throws a tremendous strain on the abdominal muscles, the weakest rowing muscles in the body; very soon the men feel this strain, become exhausted, and unable to "get forward," and finally lose "time" and "swing" and go all to pieces. Length obtained by going backwards is of no possible use. A crew ought to be "coached" to get as far *forward* as they can, to finish the stroke by bringing their elbows past their sides and their hands well in to their bodies, and then complaints about "wind" and "last" will be fewer. This was abundantly proved at Cambridge in the late May races. First Trinity, it is true, kept "head," but only because of their great strength, and because they had a stroke who understood the duties of his position. Before the races every sporting newspaper, every supposed judge of rowing in the University, was certain about only one thing, and that was that Lady Margaret must go down; the only question was where they would stop. They, however, not only kept away from Trinity Hall, but finished above Emmanuel and Third Trinity, infinitely stronger boats. The reason was that they were the only boat on the river which rowed in anything like a good style. They had the reach forward, the quick recovery, and the equally quick disengagement of the hands which marked the Oxford crew of 1868. Consequently, although a very weak lot of men, they were able to vindicate style against strength. We hope that Cambridge generally will appreciate the lesson; it is one that has not been taught them for years, and results on their own river ought to show its value.

The rowing throughout the Oxford eights manifested the characteristics of the last few years. The work of Messrs. Morrison and Woodgate has not been in vain, nor does Oxford seem willing that its meaning should be forgotten. The firm grasp of the water at the beginning of the stroke which makes the racing ship shoot with a bound through the water is still found superior to the Cambridge "finish," which sailors know by the name of a "lug at the end," and which buries the nose of the outrigger, and the words "well forward," and "quick out with the hands," are still regarded as the secrets of success. While rowing at Oxford is clearly by no means retrograding, we hope that at Cambridge it is soon to see a revival of former glories; certainly the late May races ought to lead to some improvement.

End

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